

佐島 勤

Takumu Sato

イラスト Tarou2

ドールマスターズ

01

DOLL MASTERS

佐島 勤

Tsutomu Sato

47935 / tarou2



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電撃文庫

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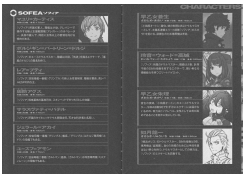
Illustrations

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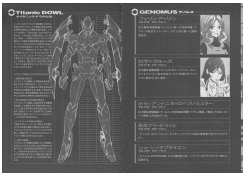
These are the novel illustrations that were included in volume 1.



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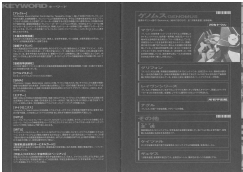


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Chapter 0

The Scene of A Certain Usual Day[\[edit\]](#)

The curve of a man made ground. A one hundred meter tall ceiling that displayed a fake sky. Towering walls made of Carbon metal (Carbon-nano tube composite steel) and resin concrete. This is a place that forces you to know that it was not made by mother-nature.

This place is a living quarter joined with a workshop of one of the ring-shaped artificial satellites, called 'Island', made and implemented by the Standford-Tuarus type space colony called 'Iwato Island'. Inside this Island's characteristic double-layered ring, in a low gravity quarter which has half G gravity (Earth gravitational force is one G), stood two armored warriors, facing each other.

Both wore a replica of plate armor, an armor made of steel that covers the wearer from head to toe. Both had a practice weapon, a spear and a Glaive.

"I'm starting!"

Said the tall young man with a spear.

"Yes, please!"

Answered the short young boy with a Glaive.

They both started moving at the same time. The man with spear deflected the Glaive's hit with a smooth movement with his bladed tip then he pulled it back and struck with a piercing stab, in contrast with the boy who clumsily deflected his strike.

Their replica armor, although made with metal lighter than iron, was still heavy. And with tiny shield on both their shoulders, the armor overall weight would be about twenty kilograms under one G gravity. Their practice weapon which was made from light carbon resin was still, under one G gravity, weight about five kilograms. But even though the low gravity environment was made in order to lessen this load, it would seem the young man was still not use to wearing armor in battle.

The conclusion came too quickly. The boy unable to counter attack and having his stance destroyed, after ten attacks the man's spear tip finally reached the boy's neck armor.

"...It's my lost"

After hearing that the man withdrew his spear from the boy's neck. A girl, probably working as a referee, having seen the duel, raised her hand as she declared with an uninteresting voice.

"Winner, cadet Kisaragi."

Then she unhappily glared at the boy who sigh deeply, after pushed up the smoke shield behind his helmet.

"That was really pathetic, Aoi. You've been here for a month, never mind the fact that you have yet to win, you can't even last more than ten attacks. How can you call yourself my brother?"

And it would seem her tone of voice emphasized her unhappiness as well, not just her gaze.

"...You may said that but I am improving my skill as well, Nee-san . Is just that Ryoichi-san is way too strong."

"Hmm... well, don't worry I'll avenge your lost for you."

"Avenge? But we're just having a simple mock battle..."

Having turned deaf ear to her brother's word. She turn, with a clank sound, to the young man.

"Ryoichi, can you be my opponent this time?"

"Alright."

She was also wearing the same armor like the two. Having her tied vibrant vermilion hair hang down behind, she put on her helmet, pulled down her helmet's smoke shield then turned to Kisaragi Ryoichi.

"Akari, are you ok using that as a weapon?"

Seeing Akari readied her Jumonji cross blade spear, one of the tradition weapon that is considered hard to handle, Ryoichi asked her.

“It’s fine. As long as it’s still the same type of weapon, I can master them, you’ll see.”

Akari answer with a daring smile while shaking her head.

“I see. That means I don’t have to hold back.”

“Naturally, let’s go!”

“Ou!”

And without any signal, their mock battle began.

“Uwaa!”

Having taken up the job of a de facto referee, Aoi dodging the two swinging weapons he awkwardly fell on his back side. Thanks to being under low gravity he suffered no broken bones, but that doesn’t mean he would felt no pain. Seeing the clashing of two spear going faster and faster, cursing quietly in his heart and was about to get up, he heard voice coming from above.

“Are you alright, Aoi-kun?”

Sweet flower smells carried by a gentle breeze like voice. The first thing that Aoi saw after turning his head around was a two meters tall wired control humanoid robot, Marionette Dowl (nicknamed Marion) and on its right shoulder, skillfully balanced, sat a small girl.

“Reine-san”

Aoi hurriedly stood up. The girl he called ‘Reine’ removed her helmet, showing the face under the visor that has covered down to under her eyes. Long eyelashes, Hazy big eyes that gave of an image of a fairy, a delicate and transient face.

The girl, with her helmet in hands, lightly jumped down from the Marion shoulder, a very soft movement even in a low gravity environment, Aoi thought that movement befits her very much. She wore a long jacket made from thin material, its hem flutter as she descends. Even though he knows that under it she wore a short pants, it still made his heart skipped a beat.

Her shoulder length hair black hair swayed gently as she collected herself. Then, without hesitating, Reine walked up to Aoi, whose heart beat was in

disarray as their distance shorten. Reine, who has a petite body, only five centimeters shorter than Aoi, look at the standing stock still Aoi with worrying eyes.

“You are not wounded, are you?”

Unable to stand her upturned gaze, Aoi awkwardly averted his.

“I’m fine. Sorry for worrying you.”

Answered Aoi, his eyes still averted.

Reine giggled as if she had found something funny.

“You don’t have to apologize. I got worry on my own anyway.”

“Ah. Yes, I’m sorry”

“There you go apologizing again. You don’t have to be so formal.”

Seeing the giggle Reina, Aoi once again, for more time than he could count, felt that her likeness of fairy was not limited to appearance alone. The words Reina uttered were in no way moody or unreasonable, **most of them** were sensible. But she gave off a hard to grasp atmosphere. Maybe because she was a special ‘ExA’.



“By the way... Is it ok if we leave that alone?”

Having looked to the direction Reine were pointing, Aoi finally remembered the duty he must accomplish.

“Nee-san! Ryoichi-san! What are you guys doing?!”

The subject of this training was to use weapon in a mock battle and to let your muscle get use to moving while wearing armor. But both Ryoichi and Akari has since let go of their weapon and start wrestling while rolling around on the artificial lawn.

For a women, Akari was considered to be on the bigger side, still she was twenty centimeters shorter than Ryoichi. Normally there would be no ways she could win in a grapple contest, but her body that got use to fighting, shown no hesitation whatsoever in close quarter combat.

“Come on, both of you. Get away from each other!”

Aoi somehow managed to get between both of them, but he ended up getting elbowed and kicked away in the end. He took no damage owing to the fact that he was still in his armor, but he would not accomplish anything by trying to hold off one of them. As Aoi prepared himself to use the last resort, calling an instructor, a pair of clumsy robot arm stretched to the fighting two from the side.

“Akari-san, don’t you see that Aoi-kun is being troubled? You too Ryoichi-san, do you feel nothing about wrestling with a girl?”

Helmet wearing Reine **pleasantly smiled** at the hanging upside down Akane and Ryoichi, while perhaps bothered by the fact that there were cables stretching from the back part of her head, she played with her hair. The other end of the cable was connected to the nap of the Marion that has, in each its hands, ankles of two hanging upside down people. Which implied that this was Reina’s doing.

“Really, you two. What were you guys doing?”

Reine reached her hands the both Akari and Ryoichi’s helmet and, without any resistance from the two, their helmet opened up, exposing the faces hidden under them.

Exposed to Reina’s direct gaze without the protection from their smoke shield, Akari averted her eyes, while Ryoichi desperately forcing a dandy smile.

“Well, to be able to have the Marion perform a completely different

movement from her own. Reina is really something.”

The answer he gave has nothing to do with Reina’s question. No matter how he tried to change the subject, the fact that they were being hang upside down would not change. Even though they are zero point five G, blood was surely starting to pool in their head. Facing the upside down smiling face of Reina, Ryoichi was the first to raise his white flag.

“...it’s my bad. I’ll apologize for getting to excited so can you please let me down? It’s true that the gravity is lower here but being in this posture while wearing armor sure is painful.”

“Sorry, Reine. Now that I’ve apologize can you stop this already? I feel like having a nosebleed.”

Following Ryoichi, Akari also apologized. Feeling satisfied, Reine operated her Marion to quickly let go of its hands. Even though falling upside down, none of them suffered the unsightly fate of having their heads hit the ground. Both Akari and Ryoichi struck their hands at the ground and rolled up, taking no damage.

“I think you should come up with some excuse for the instructor than apologizing to me though.”

Having damaged the two with her speech, Rein turns to Aoi. Smiling as if nothing has happened she, without noticing or rather, pretend not to notice, that Aoi was still a bit terrified, started a conversation with him.

“Why don’t Aoi-kun come practice with me? I think you are more suit to MITU more than NITU.”

“But I’m...”

Seeing the hesitated Aoi, Akari puffed out her cheeks.

“If you think is better to train with Reine then have it your way!”

Looking back and forth between the mysteriously smiling Reine and the turned away Akari, Aoi tongue was (mentally) numb.

“Being popular it’s hard, eh? Aoi.”

With expression as plain as day that he was holding his laughter, Ryoichi teasingly whispered to Aoi.

Aoi did not want to look up at the sky, knowing all he would see was but a limited camouflage sky. Of course, he knew that there was no way to worsen the situation that he was in.

And here I thought everyone would be more uptight than this...

All he could do was to make idle complain in his own heart —Enjoying the time when he could still make complain about such unimportant things.

Iwato high-class training school, an educational institute under direct controlled of the Solar System Development Organization army. This was a **school** where officer or cadet from the age of fifteen to twenty four were taught not only in military affairs but the knowledge and skill of modern **citizen** as well. The education here maybe a bit behind the era due to the fact that outdated generic terminal is still in use here, but there is a lot of helpful old people here so it is obvious that you would be obtaining all kind of knowledge. For Aoi whose since childhood has an idea that in order to survive one must **steal** skills from those who truly worked on the field, this place was a dream-like environment. No, for the pass two month this place has been more than just a dream.

Two months back — 31/7/2417 C.E. Everything started after that battle. At that time only one beside Aoi was his sister, Akari. Ryoichi was an enemy. Reine was a stranger who lived in a different world.

“Cadets, Assemble!”

As he thinks about the pass two month, the instructor command brought him back, to the painful and busy but also happy ‘present’.

Chapter 1

Puppeteer girl[[edit](#)]

25/07/2417 C.E.

In the coldness covered desert, walked giant armored warriors.

A battalion of giants strolled in an uneven file, kicking up dust cloud as they go. Their whole body was covered in western armor. The identity of this 25 meters tall giant is known as 'Titanic Dowl' or simply Dowl; A giant humanoid weapon.

Their type-name is 'Wang Fu', they are the same generation as the Dowl that are being used in the regular army around the world. They were an all-purpose model that supports both bombardment and hand-to-hand combat. They have heavy armor and their mobility is not so bad, still there is a rumor that they could not operate for very long because they have a lot of large output motors.

Even so, this battalion did not make use of large personal transport vehicles, instead they burdened them self with energy backpack for long period mobilization and traveled on foot in this parched dry land, because this is not a normal force and this was all they could carry in order to be at their best in immediate combat.

Above this wave of unsightly overbearing violence, a large mechanize bird spread its wing, looking down with both pity and contempt.

"I've confirm that there are 24 deserted unit from Shidou army heading to Rasa. Still no reply after repeated warning."

"The radio wave won't go through this thick jamming signal, have you tried dropping capsule?"

"The drop was done 2 minutes ago."

As if to support the communication officer's word, blinking light from a capsule dropped by reconnaissance plane shines through the sand storm.

"It would seems they are ignoring our warning, wouldn't you think?"

At the assertion in the form of a question from the vice chief, the captain slowly nodded.

Solar System Alliance Direct control Army – SOFEA's both useable inside and outside of atmosphere flying mother ship 'Gartmann' made a big circle around and directly above the deserted force.

"Seems like this is unavoidable."

In truth, they have been operating under the assumption of 'Unavoidable' from the get go, so they just turn deaf ear to their superior shameless monologue.

"Ensign Ward."

Gartmann's captain, Yusuf Armon, used the intercom of his captain seat to call the pilot standing by in the hangar, in a more mellow tone than just before.

"Yes"

The sound coming from the in-flight communicator was that of a high-pitch girl. It was clear from her voice that she is not an adult, yet there was no childlike speech defect in her pronunciation. Tone aside, the way she calmly answer was that of an adult.

"Unfortunately, there is no change to our plan, soon they'll reach Rasa self-defense sphere. After that the troop stationed at Rasa will sure to sortie and we won't be able to advance or we'll cause intercity dispute. Therefore we will crush Shidou deserted troops here."

"Roger that. Titanic Dowl 'Misty Moon', initiate dropping sequence."

The countdown began along with the girl's reply.

The large hatch under the warship opened up, showing the Titanic Dowl with its entire body facing the ground with its both sides supported.

As the controller counted zero, the supporting hook disconnected, releasing one Misty Moon, Diving to the middle of the enemy forces.

Having rearranged its posture from horizontal to vertical in mid-air, Misty Moon landed, feet first, on the parched desert without raising a cloud of dust. Perhaps

noticed the landing figure, former Shidou army Titanic Dowl, Wang Fu formed a semi-encirclement formation to intercept Misty Moon.

Releasing sharp sounds of compressed air, Wang Fu purged the energy backpack from their high-capacity capacitor. They do this because while they could walk carrying the backpack, it is not guarantee that they will be able to perform combat maneuver with them. Having regain their mobility, All Wang Fu began simultaneously attacking Misty moon.

For only one Misty Moon, there were 24 units of Wang Fu.

For size, Misty Moon is about 20 meters tall, Wang Fu is about 25 meters tall. Wang Fu has all the important position on its grim looking frame covered in armor in contrast with Misty Moon which has no eye-catching armor except for two eight meters long rectangle shield set up on each shoulder and its milky white color frame looks frail.

Normally thinking, no, normally there would not be any need for thinking consider this difference in number, the outcome is as clear as day. However the deserted force movement were impatience as a cornered rat, while Misty Moon's composure was that of a lion, lying in wait.

That reflects the difference in their combat ability.

The one who move first was the encircled Misty Moon. Against the Shidou deserted force, whom from their half circle formation, moved forward while narrowing their flanks, making a full encirclement, the milky white Dowl drawn out a long-handle weapon and rushed directly towards the Wang Fu.

The move only took an instant. The 20 meters tall Misty Moon is, for a Titanic Dowl, consider to be in the small class. But it is still consider gigantic comparing to the Africa elephant which do not even reach 4 meters tall. Yet that giant could close the distant no less than 50 meters in a speed that no eyes can follow.

A high-level maneuver only possible with built-in inertia control system.

Dowl is equip with inertia control system born from Psycronics technology. Dowl is an absurd weapon considering its size. That is why it is built to look like human in order to efficiently bring out the ability of Psycronic equipment.

Psycronics – a compound word from Psychic and Electronic. This is a

technology that make use of Psychic-ability or later called SIMA (Symbolic Image Materialize Ability), a Physical interference ability manifest from mind source, support by electronic circuit to stabilize its manifestation. It has been inductively confirmed that the closer the vessel housing the Psycronic equipment is to human, the more level of power could manifested. That is because at the moment, this system has yet to be theoretically explain, however ignoring all the unreasonable parts, immensely powerful humanoid weapons bring about by Psycronic is being sent into battles.

Besides Inertia control system, achieving high-level technology impossible using conventional technology resulting in attack ability, mobility and defenses superior to conventional weapons is the core concept of Titanic Dowl. Amongst the Psycronics equipments, the Inertia Control System, which is very popular in the military, is a standard equipment for Dowl, not just Misty Moon but even Wang Fu has them.

However Misty Moon's charge had since gone beyond Wang Fu reaction speed. Unable to react, unable to follow, a speed that has far exceed the Wang Fu's designer assumption on Dowl's maximum movement speed.

First thing that the metal black carbon-fiber reinforced ceramic blade used by Misty Moon cut down of was a right arm of a Wang Fu that was guarding its own neck, then the giant blade turned over, ignoring the inertia, and cut off of both its legs.

The Wang Fu toppled on its side, raising clouds of dust. When a Dowl suffered a heavy damage, to protect the pilot from overcurrent reversal or so forth, the cockpit unit would be eject from its chest. Without giving the cockpit unit revolving midair a look, Misty Moon attacked its next target.

Every time Misty Moon brandished its weapon, enemy Dowl lost its head and both its legs cut off. With no gap between the tip and the crescent fang, A giant halberd (TL notes: see Lubu's halberd) easily cut through Wang Fu's heavy armor

Jigsaw Glaive swung by Wang Fu was unable to even strike Misty Moon.

The enemies Gun Javelin rail gun, a needle shape javelin with explosive insert into its tip, also could not even touch Misty Moon.

Ignoring the size, the battle field that middle ages knight were marching to do

close combat, now looks like a one sided trample down.

There was too much difference in mobility between Dowl from the Shidou and Dowl from SOFEA.

The difference in mobility means the difference in level of handling the Inertia Control System.

And accompanying the difference in Dowl's performance, reflect the difference in ability of the pilot, the Dowl Master.

"Damned, You SOFEA's monster!"

Wang Fu's pilot, Dowl Master screamed in anger and despair. However that voice only fruitlessly echoed in the cockpit, for the one who would receive that transmission no longer exist.

His unit was the last one.

The moment after the milk colored Dowl disappear, he saw his Dowl's head and legs cut part from behind, scattered in the sand storm covered land.

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25 century C.E., the world has split into countless city states.

A global-scale civil war started from the struggle for underground resource, 'States dismantling war'.

Unlike head-on collision between large alliance or large union, A war that was done by instigating guerilla, terrorist or criminal syndicate from behind on order to divide other countries in to parts. Due to being a civil war no nuclear weapon were use, the one to increase their 'non-regular war potential' were the major powers, while the developed countries also strengthen their force.

Fearing nuclear terrorism, they strictly sealed of nuclear weapons. Ironically, the regional conflict all the more intensify from that.

Terrorism on transport and communications infrastructure happens in succession.

Political paralysis.

Before they noticed it, cities became lockdown fort surrounded by tall walls,

equipped with high output power plant and sunlight agriculture plant, catering on animal protein and recycle, with an exception of mineral resource, a self-sufficient city. However, due to fearing their settlement would become supply base for guerilla or terrorist, the statesman supported by the citizen turned the outside of their city into uninhabitable wasteland.

Finally after 30 years of mutual destruction using non-regular war potential, no, their cannibalism, the period of war finally reached its end.

200 years after.

The world is now govern by Lock down-cycle environment type city states called Polis. Using aviation as means of transport as well as monopolize the undersea natural resource, the one who regulated each Polis's interest is the Solar System development organization, also known as the Solar System Alliance.

Those who were allowed to be polis's citizen who think them selfs a successor of humanity, is bless with the grace of high technical civilization, consider the outside of the polis to be a lawless area and will not even turn their eyes to those who lived there.

Those who were left out of the Polis, living in the wilderness were called Auton, or Outer by citizen of Polis, has grown into a community. Other than Auton there is also a group of people who called themselves 'naturalist', who were exposed to the menace of nature itself.

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The white skin was getting dye red under the hot shower. Facing up and using both hands to hold her hair up while closing her eyes, Misty Moon's Dowl Master, Reine Ward Takajyo is letting her delicate naked body get hit by hot drops water. While the hot water, as if licking, streamed down her body, like it was hiding this bewitching jest, a white spray of hot water wrapped around her body.

After return to the far east base she belong to, Reine goes to her lodging house and took shower immediately, even though her body was neither dirty or sweaty. The cock pit of Titanic Dowl is a thoroughly optimized environment even more clean and comfortable than mother ship's cabinet. However piloting a

Dowl means to personally feel as if you have become the giant itself, wearing gigantic armor while fighting. Because the operation was executed in a sandstorm, feeling as if one self is smeared with sands, Reine is overwhelm by the obsessive idea that she must take a shower.

Finally feeling refresh after she took her sweet time washing her body, after Reine step out of the bathroom she received a call from her intercom. Leaving the video function turned off, still wearing her bath towel, she corrected her posture then answered the call. It was the base commander's secretary who called her. The order was for her to report directly to the commander's room. Reine hurriedly change her cloths.

The far east base in Okinawa is consider to be very important even amongst one of surface base for SOFEA, the Solar System Development Organization, nicknamed Solar System Alliance, board of director direct control army and the strongest unit in the alliance army. With the highest position in SOFEA not being Marshal but General, having the base commander being no less than a Major General also shows the importance of this place.

"Much appreciated, Ensign Ward. A splendid work as always."

"Thank you, sir."

At the commanding officer room, Reine was being personally thanked by the base commander, Major General Suou Agus. Not everyone would receive this kind of favor. For one with the position of Major General to give thanks to an Ensign face to face is consider unprecedented even in a place as lack in class consciousness as SOFEA.

For she is consider special even in the people with remarkable skill in SOFEA.

"About the treatment of the deserted soldier, we have decided safely deliver them back to Shidou Polis."

Hearing those words, Reine doubtfully grimaced. The fact that they desertion had been a semi camouflage and that their marched to Rasa had received tacit consent from Shidou's government was explained to Reine in Gartmann briefing room.

However Major general Suou has predicted both Reine's suspicion and her reason for it.

"After we plenty interrogate their back ground, of course. We will also tell Shidou govern of our established fact as well."

Having listened to the additional explanation, Reine's doubt melt away. In a nut shell, in order to deliver the prisoner of war they must both go conduct a political negotiation, which is a satisfactory outcome for the alliance.

"With this, that region should be stable for a while. The board of director is also very pleased with your effort."

Reine smile insincerely that the repeated compliment.

"Well... Ensign is seventeen years old, am I correct?"

"Yes."

At the sudden change of subject, Reine showed her confusion. The mature expression she wore so far has turn to something that befits her age.

"How many school course have you finished? Have you completed any high class curriculum?"

"... No."

Hearing her answer, the base commander let out a short sigh.

In that, blend the feeling of '*as expected*' and the feeling of '*this is bad*'.

"...The truth is, I received some advice from the alliance personnel department."

Reine's loss expression now has anxiety added to it.

"Whether you were given enough learning opportunity or not."

"Er, I don't really.... Tutorial from AI is sufficient for me."

Now at last, she was clearly panic. To Reine, school was a place that stirred up the memory she does not want to remember.

"So you've been saying that and it seems we at the far east base have spoiling you too much. No, I really appreciate your feeling, and it is really convenient for

me too. Unfortunately, this time what personal department says does stand to reason. There are things which cannot be learn unless you are in a proper community.”

Suou let out a short but profound sigh.

“According to SOFEA military regulations, we only commission people above 28 years old. Its true we make special exception for Dowl Master, however problem will surely arise if the officer have not receive high class education.”

Major general Suou picked up an electronic paper from his table.

“Ensign Reine Ward Takajyo. Even though this is supposed to be military order than personal order... You are to be enroll into L4 Iwato Island’s high class training school; this is an order.”

“... roger that.”

Reine tried to open her mouth many times, finally she gave a short acceptance.

Chapter 2

Fate[[edit](#)]

Odawara Auton. Polis's side had named this place Odawara Outer.

People without Polis citizenship had gathered around Hakone's terrestrial heat power plant under Odawara's control and developed into a large scale community, an energy type Auton. This plant was built three centuries ago, and as a generated facility it had met its end a long time ago. Having been shut down and abandoned by the Solar System Alliance, this terrestrial heat power plant was repaired and reopened ten years ago. Before that, Odawara was but a place dotted with small-scale refugee camps, however, in ten years' time it has grown into a large scale Auton with a population of beyond thirty thousand people.

Even though it has been two hundred years since the end of the States Dismantling War, the revival of civilization on earth is still incomplete. The ones who can recover the pre-war standard of living are those inside of Polis, while those outside can barely get by with a maintenance level of productivity. While material deficiency may be severe, the lack of energy is worse.

On the contrary, as long as there is enough energy, water, food, clothes, housing, and all that is necessary for livelihood could be created using the technology of the twenty fifth century. The Polis that is currently and normally full of energy could support an area of thirty square kilometers with ten million in population. So it is natural for people to gather around places with a reopened terrestrial heat power plant such as Odawara.

It was this terrestrial heat power plant that caused the dispute between Odawara Auton and Yokohama Polis two years ago. The reason the alliance repaired the power plant was to improve the energy circumstance for the whole of Kanto region. The alliance is pro forma Polis federation, officially overlooking Solar System resource development and regulating the interest between Polis. Terrestrial heat power plants are classified as resource development. That is why they independently do the maintenance work, however there is one more duty, as they could not ignore the interest of Polis. The Alliance does not have the

authority to give Auton the plant. The Alliance just entrusts plant management to Odawara's citizens, with permission to use the energy it produces as their reward.

However, Yokohama Polis claims to have the precedence right to use the plant. As they were built as a sister Polis to Tokyo, Yokohama's energy plant output was low, so they partly rely on Tokyo's power supply. Wanting to increase their independency as a Polis, Yokohama were longing to strengthen their energy infrastructure. Considering the scale of Yokohama Polis they couldn't expect anything more than complementary use of Odawara's power plant, however, Yokohama's government complained that it was more proper for them than for the subnormal citizens, which is what Auton citizens are called by Polis citizens, to use the plant. One can understand from the way they call Auton citizens 'subnormal citizens' that the citizens of Polis were ingrained with a type of elitism. They think themselves a legitimate inheritor of the civilized society before the States Dismantling War.

However, that is not without any basis. Considering the origin of Polis, them wanting to believe that is **a little bit** understandable.

In the period of the States Dismantling War, why must people build a massive rampart around their city to take refuge in it? That is solely to avoid the damage caused by the illegal armed groups. At the same time, the wall protects them from the violence of terrorist and guerilla, and they eliminate the armed insurgents from inside the wall. The targets are not limited to people belonging to guerilla organizations or terrorists alone. Potential members of illegal armed groups, in other words, the citizens whom they judge to be members of the armed groups are also included as elimination targets. Their selection starts from personal history, social status, business skills, household environments, and sometimes, they're measured by their economic strength.

In short, to the people who took residence in Polis, they themselves are the only descendants of **virtuous citizens** and the inhabitants outside the Polis are descendants of ruffians. Even if that is to divert their sense of guilt from being the only ones who were exclusively given a civilized living environment, in other words, self-deception, the citizens of Polis were unconsciously trying not to think like that.

That is the background of Yokohama-polis, who oppressively demand Odawara Auton to hand over the right to use their lifeline power plant. Even if we leave off the fact that the central government has collapsed, the distance between Yokohama and Odawara is too close to have any dispute. However, this leaves the just-started high-speed railroad transport network in ruin as it is and the Aviation War potential has been monopolized by the Alliance. Under these circumstance, even in a narrow region such as this, a splendid regional conflict is sure to happen. At last, the long-standing skirmish between Yokohama and Odawara is finally becoming a head-on collision.

“Scarlet-one, the enemy advance team will soon enter the effective range.”

“This is Scarlet-one, what is the scale of Yokohama-Polis' army?”

“There are five Dowl, and we see no accompanying ground troops.”

“That’s unexpectedly small, are they looking down on us?”

“Anyhow, they were of the small but high mobility type. Probably on reconnaissance duty.”

“We really don’t have any obligation to go along with that intention, though. More importantly, you should break off now. You won’t last a second if you get dragged into a battle between Dowl.”

“I’ll do just that. Scarlet-one, no, Akari. I’ll pray for your good luck.”

“If you’re going to pray anyway, just do it for my victory, OK?”

All over, to a voice command that was completely different from its original meaning, the communication between her and the scout troops was cut. Odarawa Auton’s ace Dowl Master, Saotome Akari leaned against the soft, capsize buffered cockpit seat with her entire body.

With no rampart like that of a Polis, Odawara's self-defense force is spreading all its war potential over the expected invasion route. The only thing they could not have was their inhabitants getting dragged into the fight. They could only surrender if their line of defense were breeched. It would also be the end if the enemy were to circumvent them, but that would probably not happen. It was a consensus of Odawara's army that Yokohama's army would surely attack from the front.

The difference in national power between Yokohama and Odawara is more than a hundredfold. Normally, there would not be any contest considering this difference in productivity. If this was a century before the implementation of Dowl, Odawara would not go against Yokohama's demands in the first place.

However with built-in Psycronics weapon, or rather, the optimum solution for Psychonics weapon that is the Titanic Dowl lies the possibility of overturning the difference in number by relying on the ability of the pilot. That was one of the reason for Odawara decision on a do-or-die resistance.

And the other one.

SOFEA.... Will they really come?

With her eyes closed under the helmet, Akari muttered, as if praying in her heart. The Solar System Alliance would not make a move unless for a mediation between Polis. They would not intervene in a quarrel between Polis and Auton. But it would be a different story if an actual invasion happen.

The alliance do not tolerate war. They use brute force to guide conflict to an end. And as a means to an end for most cases, they would dispatch SOFEA, Special Operation Force with Special Ability. Mechanized unit under alliance direct control that possessed ExA, Dowl Master with remarkable ability. If SOFEA's Dowl Master were to literally show their 'a match for a thousand' strength, they might be able to repel Yokohama force and enforce conciliation. That was what Akari as well as Odawara army's consensus.

Akari is confidence in her Dowl **Piloting skill**.

On the other hand, she also know that her SIMA projection is not that good. She may be fine in a one on five situation, but she has no confidence in repelling hundredfold of enemies.

All she could do is to hold out. To hold back the enemy's invasion, buying time until SOFEA intervene. That is what Odawara army plan to do.

However, to be honest, Akari doubt the SOFEA, the Alliance will intervene. For she has seen first handed, how heartless the Alliance can be. After all, the Solar System Alliance is an organization born for the sake of Polis. In Akari opinion, it is impossible for the alliance to harm the benefit of Polis for Auton's sake.

Even so, I will carry out my role.

Akari wandered to Odawara two years ago, about the time they start having skirmishes with Yokohama. At that time, the fifteen years old Akari has already made her name as a first-class Dowl Master, were accepted in Odawara as a mercenary. She has no complaint regarding that. With no relative, she has to find a place for her younger brother and herself. That is why she chose to come to Odawara, a community that has paid a very high price for her skill. To her, they were just fulfilling each other's needs. Even so, Akari do feel gratitude towards the citizen of Odawara. For this city did not used and deceive her as a child. They also accept her brother as a citizen without any unfair treatment. That is why she did not runaway to other town even when face with a war with no chance of victory.

“Tactical map.”

Dowl's cockpit seat were constructed to be completely fixed on the pilot, the Dowl Master. The only movable parts being fingers, eyelids and mouth. In case of link-error, voice command will become prioritize means of operation. As Akari's commanded, Friendly deployment diagram is project on the helmet's visor. There are eight Dowls. All of them were previous generation secondhand Dowl. For Auton, possessing this kind of war potential is considered unprecedented. Weapon is a high value merchandise, and Dowl is consider to be very expensive even amongst them. To be able to put together this much war potential, Odawara must have gone through all kinds of excessive work. However they did not do something so drastic as to accept a Dowl from terrorist-like deserters with nowhere to go.

In the friendly troop of eight Dowls standing by in a two file formation with four Dowl in each file, she turn her worrying eyes to the blue luminous point of a Dowl in the middle right of the back file. Riding in that Dowl was Akari's younger borthor, Aoi. Dowl will pick remarkable pilot. Aoi was same as her, perhaps he possess even more aptitude than her, but he was not accustom to actual fight and was hurriedly train to be put to combat.

...It'll be fine, Aoi. I won't let them get to you.

Akari was very reluctant about Aoi's sorie. But she did not object it. She could

not object just because they are siblings. To make up for that, she was determined to fight her brother's share. Red luminous point is reflected on the edge of the tactical map. It seems the one reconnaissance establish as the leader is still alive.

“Titanic Dowl, Linkage!”

Akari fired herself up, yelling the combat function transition voice command.

Dowl's pilot suit, Master Wear's neck, wrists and ankle, these five place with NITU ring must be put in between the connecter of the cockpit seat in order to connect with the Dowl. The plate touching the fore head inside the helmet sending tempting signal, putting the pilot's body in a near sleep state while keeping the consciousness awake, with the image on the visor synchronize with Dowl's vision.

NITU, Neural Impulse Tracer Unit. Nicknamed 'Nitt'. A piloting system unit operate by using the sensors layout inside the Master Wear that stick to the skin to read the nerves signal, then send them back to Dowl as control signals. Piloting using NITU is to feel like moving in a lucid dream. The video reflected on the visor is perfectly in sync, Dowl's hands and legs moves as if it were Dowl Master's own, giving no sense of discomfort. By using this system nerves tracer, it enable Dowl Master to wear this 'armor' called Titanic Dowl, becoming a fighting giant soldier.

Akari suddenly scamper her Dowl, no, breaking into a run 'wearing' armor called Dowl. The automatically start function Psycronics was showing a high level of output, but not exceedingly high. Moving smoothly as if it were really human wearing giant armor, this was not due to the strength of SIMA but the high level of NITU aptitude. To be able to move Dowl's gigantic body as better as her own, that is Akari talent.

Seeing the push forwarded Akari, other pilot start moving forward, but no unit was able to match Akari's speed. One minute after she started running, Akari made contact with Yokohama's Titanic Dowl.

In accordance to the information from the reconnaissance squad, Yokohama army were using a light armored-high mobility type 'Zetes'. Although used, Akari reddish brown, 'Talos III' is a close quarter combat type with think armor. It

might not do very well in a distance bombardment, but in a close quarter Talos III has the upper hand. If this is a one on one, Yokohama army's Dowl Master will surely avoid the battle. The reason Yokohama's Advance team Dowl did not retreat was because their enemy is but one unit, furthermore it is a lone unit protrusion leaving it in an isolated situation.

Yokohama army's Zetes simultaneously start attacking Akari's Talos III. The reason they don't use projectile weapon was in order to save the bullet, or by judging from the difference in war potential, even if they get into close quarter combat they can still win without any of their allies suffering damage. Which would normal be correct.

The high speed rotating spear tips are coming in from left and right. Akari clearly see that from inside the helmet. The level of Akari and her Titanic Dowl 'Talos III' integration was close to NITU's ideal. Akari use her small shield with spike attached to stop the blow from Drill Lance's tip. Sparks flew from the surface where the high speed rotating drill bit and the shield met, with the spike interfering with the bit's rotation.

The shield was slightly damaged, Akari ascertain that by looking at the message floating on her visor. NITU does not transmit the sense of touch. It only send feedback from the impact. This condition is also similar to wearing a full body armor. Akari rely on her Talos III mechanical output flip up both of its forearm shield stopping the drill's attack.

Zetes on her left and right lost its stance. If the inertia control system is perfectly working, the unit would never go out of the pilot's control. The reason that Talos III's shield did not lost to the trusting energy was also because Zetes upper body was unstable with the same reason. The clashing between Talos III and Zetes inertia control force field, in spite of being two on one, Talos III force can still overcome Zetes's force field.

The enemy was wide open, yet Akari could not attack.

There were five unit of Titanic Dowl 'Zetes' in Yokohama Advance team. The remaining three was starting the second round of attack, with two units from the front and one unit from the back.

Akari purposefully step forward, to drawing attack from Zetes. She used her

shield, not as to parry, but to stop the attack coming from the Drill Lance from her left and then flip up the thrust from the Zetes on her right. With her left arm, she fling off her shield that was stopping the lance, destroying the left enemy's stance. She approach the Zetes on her right, and for the first time, use the weapons she has in her hands.

A sickle-like blade facing inward. The blade was very appropriate for Dowl's size and in the middle of it, attach three saw-like hooks. The blades was in both her hands, one a piece. Its name was Sickle Shears, it was a popular close quarter weapon comparing to Jigsaw Glaive or Drill Lance.

The Inertia Control System also neutralizing enemy's weapon inertia. Heavy-weight weapons that attack using force like war axe or war hammer would not work unless they exceeds their target's inertia control power. This does not limited to Heavy-weight weapons, even weapons like sword or spear, if losing its momentum, the cutting or piecing power would not be displayed. Excluding ones who is confident on his or her own inertia control ability, unless you used weapon that could destroyed enemy's armor even in zero-distance situation like Jigsaw Blade or Drill Lance, or a weapon that lock their target in place and, not with force but with pressure, cut or otherwise shear them like Sickle Shears, you would not be able to do valid damages on Dowl.

Akari raise the Sickle Shears on her Talos III's right arm from lower-left to upper-right, drive it into enemy unit's armpit. The introvert curve blade tightly seize the unit one size smaller than Talos III. Facing the not-moving enemy unit, this time she use her left blade. From right to left, she aim for the neck.

The closer the Psycronics vessel is too human, the higher efficiency they could operate. Conversely, if the vessel lost its humanoid from the output would also drop. Thus the most effective way is to make them lose the part that made them look human.

The answer is the Head. Even losing one of its arms or legs, the output loss is ten percent at best. Losing all its limb, the maximum output lost is fifty percent. However, cutting of the head and the Psycronics output will drop below thirty percent of its original output. There for, it is theoretical for a fight between Dowl to eventually aim for the neck. Which would make Akari's establish tactic reasonable.

The Sickle Shears swung from right to left catch the neck of the Zetes that has its stance destroyed. Akari, without caring that the collar shaped armor protecting the neck has stopped her blade and neutralized its inertia, she use her brute force to pulled the shear in. This pressure cutting method would not work with a straight sword or an extrovert curved sword, because it would just slide around the armor. But a sickle-like introvert blade would cut in deeper without losing the added force. Akari operate the right handed shears to keep the enemy unit from escaping while she used her left blade to cut off enemy's head in one go.

The pressure force back from the enemy disappear. But it is not the pressure hanging on the arm. It was a more abstract energy, feeling that the output of the inertia control force field that was encroaching on this side's force field has gone down. Akari operate her inertia control system without a moments delayed. Fixed her inertia with addition of inertia coming from enemy units body, then she remove her left hand shear from her enemy. Immediately after, she release the inertia control from the enemy unit. Bashed it with the spiked shield.

One down!

Given the enemy unit toppled on its side and the ejected cockpit unit a sidelong glanced, Akari turn her Talos III around to, if looking back on her somatic sensation, the first Zetes that attack her from the right side. The current situation is four on one, only one of the five enemy unit is crushed. Without having to check the sign of the enemy finding sensor reflected on the visor, she knows that the enemies were aiming at her.

After faithfully tracing Akari's intended move movement, Talos III turned around. The optic sensor projected the body of the enemy Dowl with the tip of its Drill Lance charging her way on to the visor. It was one of the two units that first attack her from the flank. She instantly raised her left arm over her head. The small shield equipped on the left forearm clash with the Drill Lance.

One again, Akari could feel the pressure of the 'Field'. A collision between Zetes's force field that was increasing the inertia and the piercing power of the lance, and Talos III's force field that was neutralizing the inertia and killing the thrusting momentum.

Huge resistance were put on Akari's left arm. The pressure put on Talos III's shield went through NITU, creating that illusion. However, the load being put on it also meant that the shield has not been pierced yet. Between neutralizing and increasing inertia, the scale was inclined to the neutralizing side.

The drill bit was shaving of the shield's surface. Without worrying about that, Akari flipped up her shield. Sending the lance tip slanting up. She used her left hand, still holding the shear's grip to brush off the shield of the enemy that has lost its stance, then thrust both her hands into the gap between the spear and the shield.

Left and right hand, the two Sickle Shears cross over each other. The hook that took hold of the midsection of the weapon's length, just about the edge of the handle, geared with each other. The two blades become one large scissors.

This was Sickle Shears other form. The enemy's neck was inserted between the two curved blades. In defiance of the armor, the scissors made from head-cutting sickles cut off Zetes's head in one go.

Akari turned to her left. Probably becoming cautious after seeing its ally got attacked in succession. The second Dowl which challenged her in their first round of attack stopped moving and stood ready.

Akari was the one who moved first. She separated the Sickle Shear, put both her arm's shields in front and, as if to fly, hurl her Dowl toward the Zetes. A clash between shields. Failing to neutralize Talos III's inertia and losing in physical differences, the Zetes bent back. Akari raised both her sickles above her head. She directly swung down Shears biting deeply into the enemy's both shoulders. Even though both arms were not cut apart, the enemy unit was already in a helpless situation. However, Akari's charge was not yet over.

Talos III's giant body went up in midair. Still holding on to the Shear's grip she jumped in to the enemy.

Thrusting out her right knee. There was a cone-shaped horn that was supplemented with moveable armor. The destination of the horn tip was, seize in place by two sickles, enemy's face. Following the crushed sound, Zetes's head was smashed, collapsing to the ground as it is. Akari removed her Shears from the enemy unit as if to push it aside, be careful not to step on the enemy who has lost their combat ability, she landed.

The ground shake with the sound of foot step approaching. Akari's turns to where she originally came from, to Odawara. Her ally has finally caught up with her.

"This is Scarlet-one."

As she call out her call-sign, the friendly troop communication line automatically opened. "Finally caught up, huh? You guys are too slow."

"Scarlet-two speaking. That was some showing thing you did there. Let me see.... the enemies are five units of Zetes. They maybe reconnaissance Dowl, but that was still some considerable feat."

"This is Scarlet-three. Akarii, left us some bonus too."

What returned was an answer with no evil intend. Akari was not really blaming them anyway, this kind of frivolous talk was perfect in this kind of place.

"Use the call sign, you mustache-old man."

"That's cruel calling me an old man. I am still just twenty nine."

"For a seventeen years old me, you look plenty old man level. Wasn't it time for you to start having trouble walking?"

As they exchange their frivolous talk, the enemy draw close. Or not, what cut in to their communication was a regretful voice.

"This is Indigo-four. I'm sorry Nee-chan, for not going with you."

"It's fine Ao... Indigo-four for you stay behind. Since you are the rear-guard."

She was able to give a rationally sister-like answer without becoming panic, is what Akari was thinking. However she did not even notice that she was swinging her hand, still holding weapons, in front of her own face. That was how much panic she was. She also did not see other unit that was stand by her side, taken a back and retreated.

Akari knew that her brother felt a sense of inferiority toward her. She also understood that it was not something that could be resolve with reason. Just like how she does not want her brother to stand in a battle field, her brother also does not want her to fight alone. However, the reality has been harsh on the

siblings. They could not live in Odawara if Akari does not pilot Dowl, but as a citizen of Auton, Aoi was not allow to live without piloting Dowl. All she can do was to not make her brother worry while pretending not to worry about her brother.

As Akari's Talos III dangerous behavior that was quite capable of conducting friendly fire started to settle down, Dowl Master of Odawara army finally started their serious talk.

"So, what's next?"

"We don't really have any choice, do we? The one who tell us to attack the invasion force is our employer. All we can do is follow the order."

"That I know, what I asked for was the concrete idea of what should we do next. Odawara head office of defense told us to push the counter attack line as far as possible but..."

"And what they go around us? Amateur are so..."

"No, if they get through our defense the result would have been the same. Because we don't have any reserve force. Rather than them being amateur, it can't be help if they think like that."

"Well, with this much military difference they wouldn't bother to use circumvent strategy. I bet they'll rush through the shortest route. And after that, they would want to crush the resistance forces."

"I thought so too. The problem is, where should we counter attack them."

"The head office said we are to correspondence accordingly to the situation, so we have to decide on something."

"What do you think, Indigo-one? You are the squad leader, so I'll follow decision."

To Akari's word, the other six stop talking and turn to the unit that is Indigo-one.

"I think we should just they at our early position for the moment. The objective of our fight is to buy time, inviting SOFEA's intervention. If they want to recover the Dowl Master of the units Scarlet-one destroy it would take two or

three hours.”

“...wait a second, are we not going to rescue the injured?”

Hearing the squad leader's speech, Aoi hurriedly interject.

“Indigo-four. Dowl's cockpit were expected to perfectly protect the pilot. They would not cause any serious injury even if lunch to the ground in an emergency ejecting.”

Yet, no criticism continued. Except Aoi, no one else think Indigo-one's idea is inhumane.

“It is just as Indigo-one said, Indigo-four. First and foremost, we don't have the composure to take any prisoner.”

Being directly in front of him, Akari rebuked his naivety.

“Now that its decided, let hurry back.”

Taking the initiative, she follow her leader's order.

Akari casually turned to her eyes to the left side of the path. Beyond the compressed soil road made to withstand Dowl's walk, ones can sees rows of green paddy fields. Agricultural land of the naturalist who do not rely on food plant. The weather favorable this year, if this continues they should be able to harvest enough crop that there would not be any starvation.

It has been two hundred years since they stopped investing on arable and grazing land, fearing it would become supply base for illegal armed groups. Even in this unstable climate, yet to use sufficiency chemical fertilizer, agrichemical and more importantly not getting any fuel, the classic agriculture easily fall into bad harvest. Thus with starvation and illness, possibly thinning out, a lot of people died. That is the livelihood of the naturalist.

They have not cram themselves into weapons and force the give and take lives. In return they lost the means to resist fate, all they can do is give them self into its violation.

I will not yield to something like fate. I will do anything but to drop dead on the road side without resisting.

Akari look straight forward, continuing to walk down the wide road made for

large ground machine.

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The wholeheartedly earth tremor as the giant metal strode. Thirty unit Dowl squad of Yokohama army marched in a two plus for by eight square formation without a single disorder. With twenty eight units of Yokohama army official Titanic Dowl 'Kongou', one 'Tokushaka' which specialize in bombardment and is for squad leader use and finally, Yokohama army's ace Dowl Master Kisaragi Ryoichi's personal use 'Shakara'. All were state-of-the-art machine developed by Tokyo Polis.

They stopped at the remains of the battlefield where wreckages of Advance team's Zetes scattered.

Five units with its head theoretically destroyed and five abandoned cockpit unit. There was nothing irregular with the cockpit as far as eyes can see. There was no traces of escaped, probably because the pilot was still unconscious. To be hallucinated with pain ones should not feel from the unit being damage is the weak point of NITU.

Of course, it is not at the level of creating a physical injury, so in time, the pilot would wake up as if nothing had happened. On the contrary, it's also mean that not much time has passed since they had been attacked.

"Seems like they'd been done in pretty quick."

"It is because they use the cheap one like Zetes. They were fast but were second-rate in all other specs."

In the conversation between the squad leader and the ace, no unit raised its objection. It maybe because the squad is in complete discipline, or maybe because the other Dowl Master holds the same opinion. *"They did work their salary, so let's leave it at that."*

The reason there was no sympathy towards Zetes, was because they were not Yokohama army's regular soldier, but a mercenary.

The Yokohama army official Dowl 'Kongou' was a strong safeguard for point

defense used and not cut out for reconnaissance.

This is where Yokohama Polis employed a self-proclaimed professional at reconnaissance and construction mercenary for Odawara invasion. There we complaint about wasting budget, but Yokohama leading class was willing to be careful for the sake of not drawing out the fight. The reason was the exact opposite of Odawara. In order to not spare anytime for the Solar System Alliance intervention.

“The one who did this is a previous generation Talos-series.”

The battle situation of Akari and reconnaissance squad was being hooked up to Yokohama army main force. *“They may not be same model, but the other were also from one previous generation just like Talos. No sign of them setting any traps.”*

“If they think this has the ability to buy time, then we must be sorely underestimated.”

The fact that Odawara army battle objective was to buy time until the Alliance intervention was known to Yokohama army. There could be no other plan, considering the difference in war potential. Hundredfold difference in national power does not mean that the number of Dowl own by Yokohama army is hundredfold to Odawara army. The number of Dowl own buy Yokohama is sixty units. Less than eight fold to Odawara. And only half that number were put into this time anti-Odawara war. But even for thirty against eight, there is too much war potential that there should not have been any challenges from the beginning. (By the way having sixty units of Dowl is consider fairly numerous in the eyes of the world. If combining with one hundred units of Tokyo Polis, it would becoming a top class war potential in the world.)

“We’ll make those Outer lot knows there place soon enough. But let just get these guys out for now.”

The squad leader unit issue a recues order for the Zetes’s Dowl Master. There would not be any unusual things happen to their lives even if shut in the cockpit seat. However, if they were left to connected with NITU link that has been cut from the Dowl, the chance that they would suffer from motion impediment that could last many weeks or month is high. After the battle is over, or sometimes

interrupted midway, it has become battle field commonsense to open the ejected cockpit and drag out the pilot.

“Please wait, squad leader.”

However, Yokohama army ace pilot, Kisaragi Ryoichi, interpose his objection to the established tactic.

“It may take time several hours, but I think four units is enough for rescue operation. The rest should immediately chase after Odawara army.”

“You are saying we should divide our war potential?”

“Odawara’s war potential would not be any more than ten units anyway. Even if thirty units become twenty six units, it would still be in the scope of calculated error. Also we cannot waste time in this time strategy.”

There is no voice of approval to Ryoichi report to superior. The entirety of twenty eight Kongou probably understood that his opinion was a right one, however considering if they became those who needed rescue, they cannot sentimentally agree.

“Understood, let’s adopt you opinion.”

But as expected for those who were chosen as a commanding officer, the squad leader prefer logic over emotion.



“Unit number twenty five to twenty eight is to rescue the reconnaissance squad, the others are to continue marching forward.”

The squad leader’s unit ‘Tokushaka’ and Ryoichi’s unit ‘Shakara’ walked

together side by side. While the other twenty four units of Kongou followed behind.

The Odawara defense squad's DOWLS was preparing itself against Yokohama army in an abandon seaside city of the old era ten kilometers from their Auton. They have heard the rumors that Tokyo Polis has supplied Yokohama army with state-of-the-art amphibious unit. In case they were circled behind from the sea by that unit, all they has to do was to foam the entire water. They reason for them coming to the sea side was to detected the unit advancing mid ocean. That is why when they perceived that Yokohama army is approaching from the front using radar, one of their concern disappeared. However, Dowl master of Odawara army, Akari included, was attacked by discomposure.

"Those guy, they came too fast!"

"It can't be, are they using carrier in the combat area?"

"No, we didn't perceive any reaction from carrier. It's carrier for Dowl, that enormous thing can't be hidden from our radar!"

"They must have abandon the reconnaissance squad on their way here."

After Akari's brief comment, the communication line become packed with angry roar.

"...then, what about those people?"

The most shocked person receiving Akari's comments was Aoi.

"Dowl's cockpit can perfectly protect the pilot from the crash after the ejection. Is that right, Nee-san?"

"Their protection from outside shock is perfect. However the buffer was too perfect, there is a lot of cases that the Dowl Master would be fixed to the seat without being released from the device. For example, the NITU link."

"If you were not released from the NITU... what would happen?"

"The nerve signal sucked up by the link would have nowhere to go, Dowl Master's body would have a misrecognition that they had lost their arms and legs. Because of that, Dowl Master's body would suffered from movement

impairity for a period of time.”

“How much is this “period of time”?”

“A few weeks, or a few month.”

Hearing that, Aoi breath out a sign of relieve. For citizen of Auton or The naturalist, having movement imparity for a few month can be mortal. But for Polis’s citizen, there should be no problem regarding medical treatment.

However, those thinking were too hasty.

“But nerve impediment after arms and legs were important organ. For example, if it reach the heart, they’d die in a few month.”

“That’s..! That means because we didn’t recue them earlier, those people are...”

“Calm down, Indigo-four.”

It was the acting squad leader Indigo-four’s calm voice that stop Aoi’s discomposure.

“I don’t think Yokohama army would abandon their colleague in coming here. They probably left the minimum number of personal needed for rescue.”

“They divided their own military force?”

“Yes, Scarlet-two. It is not a strange decision considering the difference between our war potential and theirs. Also this is not the time for that conversation.”

Abroad - meaning from anywhere not the Japanese islands – there were cases where Polis were spearheaded by such mercenary squad. Anymore point less talking is not allow, was the underlying meaning in Indigo-one’s speech.

“Indigo-four, report the estimated time for them to get in Gun Javelin effective range!”

“Seventy seconds at the current speed, sir!”

Aoi was the one the most meagre experience in this party. For the reason he was in the last position in line and was assign with information analysis duty. Aoi remember his duty after hearing Indigo-one’s word, he hurriedly call up his tactic

support monitor and answer.

“All unit, spread out!”

There were groups of mid-size building that remained relatively close to its original form left in this spot. That was their reason for choosing this place as an interception point.

The Odawara squad secretly dispersed while using abandon buildings as a cover. “Indigo squad, prepare to fire. Scarlet squad keep on standing by.”

The squad leader order the backup team, himself included, to release the safety device of the Gun Javelin.

Gun Javelin is a Titanic Dowl main weapon for bombardment battle. If one were to easily explain its shape and property, one would said that it is, compared to Dowl size, a thin needle with explosive inserted into the tip and it is fired using rifle type railgun. Even though it has a shape of a gun, the core of it was, after all, a jevalin. That is why it was not called ‘Javelin Gun’ but ‘Gun Javalin’. The three meters long and ten centimeters in diameter javelin was loaded into a cartridge, nine to ten in each. It is three kilometers per second under earth atmosphere, out of earth atmosphere, the explosive spear tip is fire at the speed five kilometers per second

The javelin itself was not too big for infantryman to handle, but it was fired using railgun at a speed that produce an overwhelming power. The railgun entire body length is commonly about ten to twelve meters, about half a Dowl height. While it is important for the rail to be long in order guarantee that the javelin has plenty acceleration, it also hindrance the ability to carry other weapons. For that reason, it has become theoretical for Dowl to utilize mix teams of bombardment battle squad and close proximity battle squad. There is also peculiar case of lone unit entering the battle field, but only if that unit was exceedingly strong.

“The enemy invasion speed has not changed. Entering range in three minutes.”

Leaving the tactic support monitor opened, Aoi prepared his Gun Javelin. Because he is not as good as Akari at synchronizing with Dowl, he has an uncomfortable feeling of not feeling the heaviness of his gun.

In regards Aoi’s **aptitube for NITU**, too bad it is no match for Akari. He

discriminate himself that he no talent like his sister, or under the impression that he is. Although his sister is not an ExA, she is unmistakable a genius when it comes to Titanic Dowl piloting skill.

Her first time boarding a Dowl was at twelve years old. And in that campaign, the greatly renowned, not only in Japan but to the whole region of East Asia, Kyoto Polis's ace, was crushed by her.

As is common with the era, the sibling has blood of various race mixed into. Although they themselves have never get out of Honshu. (TL notes: largest of the four main islands of Japan) However he believed that where ever they go in the world, Akari would still be rated as a first grade Dowl Master. If she were alone she should be able to enter Polis regular army, then gaining citizenship would no longer be a preposterous dream.

If for the sake of his sister, it would be better if he was not here..... was what Aoi never thought of. To begin with, that kind of sensitive human would not be able to live in this era. It may be imprudent, but Aoi has come to a clear decision that in order for him to survive he must have military talent like his sister. However, for a boy living in an era like this and for having being strongly conscious about being under protection of his sister, who is not but one year difference in age, his desire to become a man is stronger than others.

I'll show them that even I can fight!

For Odawara Auton, this invasion from Yokohama was a great calamity, a danger they have never faced before. But to Aoi, it was a chance. That was what he thought, until this moment.

"They have entered our effective range!"

The moment the front row of Yokohama army entered two thousand meters boundary from Aoi's position, he yelled out. Since he has already finished linking with his unit, his voice reached his allies through means of communication machine without the need of him making any conscious operation.

"Fire!"

Accompanying Indigo-one's order, the Indigo squad's Gun Javelin simultaneously let out a shower of sparks. The gun powder equipped throwing

spear was fired at its maximum speed under the earth atmosphere, three kilometers per second. The throwing spear's mass is almost non-existence when comparing to Dowl's body, but its knock back cannot be overlook considering its initial velocity. The fact that something as unstable as a two footed Dowl can use Gun Javelin is because they are able to suppress the knockback using inertia control. On the contrary if you cannot skillfully utilize inertia control at the time of fire, your aim would be inaccurate due to the knock back.

Damned, I missed!

Seeing the javelin he launched exploded midair, Aoi mentally clicked his tongue. In order to prevent stay bullets, the explosive power inside the shell fired from Gun-Javelin will explode will explode after one second. So midair explosion meant he missed the target.

The enemies did not break their square formation. A battle formation, even if happened by chance. Yet the he did not hit them. That is because he was too naïve on inertia control and that he wanted to show off by aiming for enemy unit's head, even Aoi himself understood that.

This time, looking for certainty, he aimed for abdomen. If comparing to the chest that is protecting the cockpit unit, it has comparatively thinner defense. If the armor is skillfully remove, even a Gun-Javelin could destroy a Dowl. However Aoi who was carefully taking aim under the shadow of the abandon building could not pull the trigger. Getting shot from other unit except Aoi, the enemies suddenly change their formation. Dense bombardment were sent out from a half-circular formation. The abandoned building was shot as a cover, while Aoi's Talos IV got showered with splinters. With their gun barrel showered with debris, they became unable to fire.

"Scarlet-three!"

"Damn it, my leg got hit!"

"I got hit in the arm! I cannot fire anymore!"

"Indigo-two, Scarlet-three, exchange your weapon!"

As Yokohama army's Kongou continued to shower bullets, Indigo-one ordered his shot allies to exchange role.

“AAAaaaaa!”

Aoi let out a beast like scream. Not one that predator bellow in front of its pray, but a scream of a cornered pray.

Aoi's Talos IV stepped out from the shadow of the abandoned building that can no longer function as a cover. He continued to fire his Gun-Javelin without aiming and hit three Kongous by chance.

But that is the end of his beginner's luck. A violent crash blown Talos IV's left hand shield away. Aoi was not finished off because he was turning over from the crash making the enemy's aim accidentally off. That meant he still has another chance. However as he turned over, fallen on the ground as is, to looked at the unit that attacked him. Aoi though in his heart that he was 'done for'.

His opponent was a bombardment-battle type Tokushaka which has two Gun Javelin mounted on both its shoulder shield. Odawara has no such clever thing as information bureau. However, they do get their hands on information regarding enemy commander's unit. Tokushaka was a state-of-the-art Dowl developed by Tokyo Polis. From the information they possessed Tokushaka seems to have improved stability when firing.

Their progress has been hinder since after that commanding officer's unit started attacking. Firing from the back of the enemy lines, Tokushaka caught Aoi's unit with its first shot. The second missed on nothing but pure luck. Something so fortunate probably would not happen again. At least to not avert eyes from fate, Aoi glared at the readied Gun Javelin's barrel.

However, main camera of the Talos IV Aoi was riding could not look into Tokushaka's gun barrel. Tokushaka was point the gun barrel at other unit.

Aoi relaxed his shoulders. Thinking that he just escaped from desperate dilemma, he involuntarily loosen his tension. In spite of being right in the middle of the battle field.

“Aoi, to your right!”

The reason Tokushaka's stopped aiming at him. Aoi confirmed it with despair. Approaching from his right was a bright navy-blue unit. Above its shoulder, both side of its head mounted jet engine like weapons. That conspicuous color and

form, the unit was, without doubt, Yokohama's ace unit 'Shakara'.

Aoi hurriedly got up. Putting his right hand on the ground. However his right hand was unable to support the full body weight. He unsightly fell down. He turned his neck to look at his right arm and found that the elbow armor was dislodged. It was probably damaged from being pinned under torso when he had fallen down. Dowl's piloting system would display equal level of maneuverability to the pilot's body, but would not return the sense of pain. Even if the Dowl was damaged it would not feedback the information to the Dowl Master as a sensation.

Although it was too late, Aoi noticed the damage sign showing at the corner of his vision. A damage that would not happened to the Polis regular army's unit. But Aoi's Talos was a second handed of unknown origin, maintain by the lack-of-material Auton. It was required to be defensive when fallen over, yet he was being negligent. As a result, he had lost the use of his right arm.

Losing stance for the second time, evasion has become hopeless. It would seems that the payment for his negligence was to be his own life. As he thought that, he used his hand to get himself up. He has no intention of waiting to be killed.

That struggle has called forth miracle.

No, saying this was a miracle would be rude to the related party. He jumped up with determination the she would save him.

Aoi's vision was crossed with giant red-tea colored figure. Contrary to the grass land or ruins, an eye catching desert camouflage of Talos III. Akari's unit tackled Shakara.

Although it was blown away by the tackled, Shakara rearranging its posture midair and softly landed.

Talos III exceeds Shakara in terms of unit weight. Shakara's Dowl Master, Kisaragi Ryoichi did not brace his legs at the increased inertia, he neutralize inertia at the time of contact reducing the damage received from the crash to almost zero. And while in midair he used water jet on both his shoulder to spayed high pressure water and use that knock back to control his unit.

“Get down, Aoi!”

Yelling at her brother and kicked off the pavement at the same time. As the ruin road collapsed under the size her feet, Akari closed in on Shakara.

Looking through Shakara, no, overlapping field of vision with Shakara, Ryoichi focus on the charging Talos.

Shakara’s Psycronics released a roar like a distant thunder. An auditory hallucination that happened when SIMA, Symbolic Image Materialize Ability interfere with the space structure.

There two types of Dowl, personal unit and mass production unit. Personal unit was literally, made to match the pilot or the Dowl Master, and to be personally used by the Dowl Master alone. The greatest difference between personal unit and mass product unit was the existence or non-existence of characteristic armament.

SIMA would bring forth individual power form the individual’s mind. Not the mechanically standardization ability so the difference between strong and weak points were unusually big. Except for the basic equipment like inertia neutralize device or gas movement control device that depends on pilot to master and not aptitude, is it efficient to be specialize in one’s own field of expertise.

The characteristic armament is a weapon made to match the Dowl Master SIMA trait. Using Pyscronics to amplify Dowl Master’s especially good SIMA for attack and defense. So by means of characteristic armament, personal Dowl can display their one and only paranormal ability.

Kisaragi Ryoichi specialize SIMA was liquid flow control. The cylinder, water jet mounting on both Shakara’s shoulders was the characteristic armament that make the best of this ability. Shakara’s right hand was gripping the handle under the cylinder on its right shoulder. Four steps until Talos III would make contact with Shakara.

Shakara used it right hand to aim the tip of the water jet cylinder at the red-tea colored unit. Three steps until contact.

Ryoichi overlap the cross gauge surfacing in front of him with the Talos III neck part. Two steps until contact.

The time Shakara's characteristic armament spit out a thin high pressured water current and the time Talos III raise its shield over its eyes was mostly the same.

The shield flown from Talos III left hand.

The red-tea colored giant place both hand on the ground in front of the navy-blue giant.

It did not collapse. It was doing crouching start as if to ready itself for a dash.

Talos III vigorously rise up, swing its Sickle Shears in a scooping motion.

To that, Shakara assaulted with countless buck shots.

The water pebbles fired from left shoulder's unit push back Talos III's giant body.

Shakara turned the tip of its Drill Lance to the posture destroyed red-tea colored unit.

The rotating bits hum as it approach Talos III's neck from the left side where it had lost its shield.

Shakara's lance pieced not the red-tea colored but the black-ash colored unit, Aoi's Talos IV.

"Aoi!?"

Akari screamed.

As if to say its ok, the Talos IV that has intergraded with Aoi turned its face and nod.

Sahkara's Drill Lance the pieced Talos IV's left hand stopped just before the torso.

Talos IV began its dash.

Probably caught off guard, Shakara who exceeds Talos IV in terms of Inertia control ability got semi carried backward.

Beyond there, was a former century wharf, a ruin of a building built on the shore side.

Aoi continued to plunge into the abandon building.

Shakara's back destroyed the brittle building's wall surface.

But it was still far from fatal wound. Shakara was not buried in the abandon building, it had braced its legs and stand firm before Talos IV. It probably operate its inertia control at the very last moment.

Talos IV's right arm have not moved since just before. Its left arm was also being torn off. If he is thrust away, this time for sure, it will be a desperate situation. Aoi no longer has any means to resist.

Damn it, there has to be something!

However, Aoi did not give up. Giving up would mean death. Having get through those day and finally end up at Odawara, Aoi do not have such choice as to except death.

He would never gave up even in despair.

He would cling on no matter how absurd.

With that blind attachment in life, Aoi fill up his Pyscronics engine.

Paranormal phenomenon bring about by Titanic Dowl's heart.

At that moment, opened the door of possibility.

Having swallowed up Aoi's SIMA, in exchange, Talos IV Psycronics engine give him the power he needed for his will to fight. Manifested in a form of weapon.

Lightning swelled up.

Supreme ruler of lightning raise its first cry.

Great output of one teravolt.

Discharged in a millisecond.

With output that rivals natural phenomenon and energy amount ten times natural phenomenon, the thunder was fired at point-blank range to the navy-blue unit.

Dowl is a machine that uses electricity. Excessive voltage would damage the internal mechanism. That hit did not exceed Shakara's endurance limit, but has

plenty influence to cause temporary decline in functionality.

By the way, that instant output was a thousand fold compared to commercial atomic reactor used in the 20 century. Even though assisted by Pyscronics engine, that kind of power was still bring about by one person. Due to in being instantaneous the amount of energy itself is nothing impressive, however that instant output was clearly beyond Dowl's output. In that moment, Aoi has displayed 'Power' that exceeds Dowl.

If pursuit was possible, Aoi would probably shot down Yokohama army's ace and achieve a most spectacular victory. But it was not the time, only small crevice was open for the door of possibility.

It would seem that fate has no intention to perform anymore services.

Not just Shakara, but Talos IV's Pyscronics engine was also silent. Easily put, even though it is different, overheated.

The state-of-the-art Shakara would re-activate in a moment.

However, Talos IV damage has exceeded its threshold. Originally, this unit was not made to fire off electric shock. Pyscronics engine is device that amplify and stabilize the output of SIMA in spite of personal SIMA traits, however to efficiently utilize attack or defense power, the equipment must be custom to satisfy that kind of power, hence need of characteristic armament. It was not assumed in the design stage that Talos IV's Pyscronics engine would utilize this level of powerful SIMA, so when the output did not go smoothly it would place a lot of burden on the engine.

And more than that.

I...can't...move, I... have...to...get...mov..ing....or...else

Aoi's fatigue as already crossed its limit. The one who cannot stand the excessive released of SIMA was not the second handed unit. Aoi's mind that has not been through sufficient training, was assaulted by feeling of exhaustion and finally fainted after released of excessive SIMA.

What was that electric shocked moments ago?

Shakara's overall function was numbed. In spite of that, Kisaragi Ryoichi still thought about it in his cockpit seat.

Because he understood that the unit's numbness was temporary and would recovered in no time. The restoration has already started. Ryoichi heart is patience, his conscious turning to the unidentified attacked that his unit just received.

That was certainly an attacked by means of SIMA, but...

Talos IV was a previous generation Dowl that has all its spec ascertained. That unit has no such function as releasing electric shock. In At the same time, he also understood that it has no Pyscronics equipment that can convert SIMA into electric shock onboard.

Using only the basics function of Pyscronics engine to drawing out attack that rivals characteristic armament?

Within range of his knowledge, only ExA could do that.

"Impossible."

Ryoichi involuntarily muttered through his mouth.

To his muttering, Shakara's electronic brain answer with an alert for improper command.

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The clash between Odawara and Yokohama was known to the Solar System Alliance since the time Yokohama Dowl unit departed from their Polis. To SOFEA, the fluttering of Armed Dispute Eradication flag means mobilizing order. The moment Aoi's Talos IV and Ryoichi's Shakara clashed, flying mother ship number one 'Grenblu' which was above Sagami Bay's open sea in order to intervene directly after both army physically collide was notified.

Inside the Grenblu was SOFEA ExA, Lieutenant Borjigin Bartlean Dorji was waiting for a time to descent in his favorite unit 'Rudra'.

"Rea."

“Yes, lieutenant Dorji.”

“What was that reaction just now?”

Dorji who was looking at the all sorts of data on his monitor and not the error linked external camera, asked the bridge about the instantaneous high SIMA output with puzzlement.

“It was just SIMA reaction sent from infighting Dowl at the Sagami Bay coastal area.”

Sergeant major Rea Pudi, novice operator in charge of information support for Rudra, answered the question. She maybe a fifteen years old girl but she was trained in Psychic perception field, to identify character with high ESP. She is currently receiving actual combat education in Grenblu as a candidate officer for SOFEA.

A lot of ExA were hard to please. Those who holds high level of EPS is usually a ‘sensitive’ type when it comes to everyday life. Rea Pudi who was a little childish but is very friendly and caring was, Dorji included, a favorite amongst Grenblu’s crew.

-Back to the main subject-

“Was it belong to Yokohama army?”

What Dorji was thinking of was Yokohama army’s ace, Kisaragi Ryoichi. He was still not yet twenty years old so there is room for his SIMA to grow. Since he was already one stepped away from becoming ExA, he might have had an awakening in the middle of the battle field.

“I am really sorry, lieutenant. I cannot determined whose army that belongs too.”

However, Rea Pudi reported in an apologetic manner. Since Ryoichi was a Dowl Master that has caught SOFEA’s attention, they must have already grasp his SIMA aptitude. However if they cannot specified the source, it means there is a high possibility that the recent SIMA belongs to other individual.

“Understood. How long until decent?”

“Umm...sixty seconds until decent, lieutenant. Beginning count down.”

As he listened to Rea Pudi's skillfully reverberated soprano, 'This should be interesting' was on his mind.

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The Talos III Akari was piloting vigorously get up and start charging.

Her destination was not the Shakara who was in the middle of reactivation and was unable to move, but Talos IV who was stranded between enemy's fire and his own power. Akari's reason for fighting was 'for my younger brother'. If referring to her policy, the choice was obvious, she would prioritize rescuing Aoi before the destruction of Shakara.

The damage her unit received from Shakara also strengthen her decision. In the previous battle, if her left hand shield was not covering her chest when she was stopped midway in her slash, Shakara water bullet would have hit Talos III cock pit directly.

It is theoretical in a fight between Dowls to snatch away opponent's inertia control ability, for that the priority target was neck then the four limbs. However, even the head and four limbs were cut off, Dowl Master would not suffered immediate death in action. Dowl did not use any kind of fuel that would exploded when from unit being damage, nor it was equipped with missiles or bombs. At best the anti-position strike model which carries explosive material would get caught up in a secondary explosion from an external weapon, or the electric current that is driving the Dowl would reverse current back to the cockpit seat and would receive a burn from the electronic shock. (Brain, heart or other important organ was under excessively courteous electric shock counter measure.) If Dowl Master died in action in a battle between Dowls, it would be mostly because his opponent was clearly intended to kill.

However, because the disposition of characteristic armament, sometimes it would sometime led to opponent Dowl Master unintentionally death. Shakara characteristic armament was of that type.

Not only that Akari's unit right arm has a hole where it shield used to be, but the left forearm covering the head also lost its armor and was shredded. More

than that, the part where she could not cover with her shield was also miserably shaved off.

Shakara would probably finished its reactivation while she rescue Aoi.

Akari's unit would not be able to stand Shakara's next attack.

Akari could not depend on allies for protection in this situation. She maybe a teenage girl, but she knows that battle field is not a place where one can be meaninglessly positive.

Even so, Akari did not hesitate.

After struggling, Akari finally reached Aoi's unit. Akari used her right hand weapon to cut off Talos IV head, and used that same right hand shield to thrust away that the chest part.

Suddenly, his vision black out. And directly after that, a scene where his sister's unit was cutting off his head.

"Nee-san!?"

Aoi yelled from his cockpit seat as the link with his Dowl was forcefully disconnected.

His voice would not reach his sister.

He could not continue yelling.

After its head was cut, Talos IV pilot protection system kicked in.

The cockpit unit that was urgently separated from the body was vigorously thrust away, landed on the abandon road surface, gouging out the damaged pavement.

The impact that exceeded buffered equipment sent Aoi's consciousness down into the darkness.

Cockpit unit's condition cannot be ascertain from the outside. Keeping Aoi off from the range of immediate combat, Akari's breath out a sigh of relieve (Even though that motor nerves signal was traced by NITU but did not result in any

movement). With this, at least Aoi would not die in this battle field, is what Akari was thinking.

Finally, after that impact Talos III left arm finally came off. Starting from the left elbow. Thus degree would probably not be judged as 'losing human form', the Psycronics output would not drop more than only three percent. However, bad omen was shown from the mechanical part driving the arms and legs. The maneuver when she came to Aoi rescue has been forceful, breaking through Kongou line of battle, struggle through Tokushaka bombardment and wedge herself in front of Shakara was already fitting of the phrase doing the unreasonable.

Akari some look over her shoulder with her impairment unit.

The navy-blue unit was just finished its reactivation.

Shakara's Psycronics roared once again.

Akari tightly grasps on to her right hand Sickle-Shears. The resistance has been weirdly light. The integration between Akari and her greatest weapon that is her Dowl has become dim.

I guess this is hopeless...

Not the same as becoming weak-hearted. The strangely calm though ran across Akari conscious. She was concern of what would become of Aoi if she were killed. Aoi who she was protecting until now, who protected her even though he has never shown any kind of power. Those though strangely gave Akari a sense of fulfillment.

I have no plans to go down without a fight though.

At least she'll return a blow in her final moment. Just as Akari had made her decision, the rescuer arrived **as planned**.

A giant lightly flown down from heaven.

A Titanic Dowl dropped down and stood just between Akari's Talos III and Ryoichi's Shakara.

Body height of twenty five meters. Largest class for present Dowl and extremely famous unit. Highly renowned ace unit even in the strongest of

SOFEA.

“Rudra!”

Akari unconsciously yelled out the Dowl’s name.

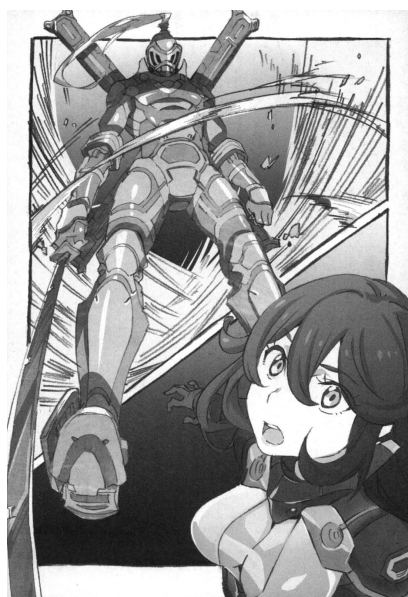
As Rudra landed, it passed an advice through the standard frequency signal.

“This is the Solar System Development Organization direct controlled mechanized unit and SOFEA affiliated ship ‘Grenblu’. Both Odawara and Yokohama army, please stop the battle immediately.”

It was still uncertain whether this was planned or not. Nothing but a too convenience of an assumption for the organized resistance strategy by Odawara, their desire has bear fruit in the highest of forms.

The objective of Akari and Odawara army battle was too buy time until SOFEA’s intervention. They could not do anything that would, by any chance, fail that objective.

Akari immediately let go of her weapon.



On the other side, Ryoichi who was piloting Shakara was hesitated to decide how to cope with that request. He has recognized that the unit right in front of him was SOFEA’s ace-unit, Rudra. Ryoichi though that it’s fighting strength would not be just a rumor.

However Yokohama army still has more than twenty units, twenty two healthy units to be precise. Rudra is just one unit. More than that, this side also have the mostly state-of-the-art Kongou, the personal unit Tokushaka as well as Shakara.

Completely different from the poor-Polis old type unit, the insufficiently maintain unit of deserted troop or Auton army that is fill with second hand unit. Even if their opponent were SOFEA's ace, it is unthinkable that they would lose with this difference in numbers.

To Ryoichi, his skill is something to be brag about. His SIMA index was ninety eight. The boundary between ExA and those not so were the SIMA index of one hundred. He did not think that ExA would be so much different from him. The liquid flow control characteristic armament was consider to be a high fighting strength type even amongst other characteristic armament, he also secretly though that there was no Dowl Master who can use the liquid flow control characteristic armament as skillful as himself. He was also confidence in piloting the Dowl itself.

If he could shoot down SOFEA's ace here the name 'Kisaragi Ryoichi of Yokohama' would probably become well-known to the world. Regarding the operation, it would completely crush the will to resist of Odawara. No, it may be a start of the destruction of the present world political system where Solar System Alliance reign over Polis's head. Since he has embraced the youthful sympathy for the slogan like 'True independence' or 'True self-reliance' and also possessed a youthful ambitious heart that wants to materially contribute to the cause.

"What do we do, squad leader?"

Hiding his intention to fight, Ryoichi sent transmission to Tokushaka.

"The Polis did not order for a ceasefire."

The answer to Ryoichi question was in according to the regulations. They were dispatch with an order to occupy the terrestrial heat power plant under Odawara control. What SOFEA demanded was contrary to that order. As long as Polis government do not change the order to occupy, they, the regular army, have no authority to stop the battle.

Although, this was after all, principle theory. If there were big changes in the situation, until there is answer from Polis government, it would be the right and duty of the field commander to use his authority to stop the fighting. SOFEA's intervention falls under 'big changes in the situation'.

No, to Yokohama army, SOFEA's intervention was a situation they expected from the beginning. Yet there was no plan to interrupt the battle, it could only mean the government thought that it was OK for them to ignore SOFEA recommendation. At least Ryoichi thought so.

"Roger that. Resuming the operation!"

Ryoichi used the geographical monitor to confirm his position. The sea is directly behind. The so called, a 'fighting with one's back to the wall'. However it was favorable for him.

Shakara pointed the tip of Drill Lance at Rudra. The other allies unit that has heard his communication with the squad leader also change into formation supporting Shakara. Ryoichi filled the Psycronics engine with his SIMA, and used voice command to open his characteristic armament circuit.

Through Rudra's eyes, Doriji has grasp that the Shakara - it's Dowl Master, Kisaragi Ryoichi has decided to fight him.

"Lieutenant, the enemy unit, Shakara's SIMA reaction is increasing! Please be careful!"

From the mother ship Glenblu, Rea Pudi's panic voice was transmitted through communicator.

"Roger that."

Now that you mention it, this is the first time Rea has been in a real battle.
Dorji casually thought.

It has been a year of real combat for him too. At first, his enemies would lost their will to fight just seeing Rudra's silhouette. So for Dorji who felt somewhat unsatisfied, seeing Shakara showing its fighting spirit, he felt somewhat exited.

If it was possible to avoid battle, he would do avoid it. He has no intention on raising objection to the repeatedly preach theory from his old friend. However it cannot be help that he has a warlike personality, Dorji defiantly thought. Ironically, the combat duty has only been given to the battle-hating **her**, giving him no chance to exercise his talent. Leaving Dorji a bit frustrated.

He imagined a scene where a castle gate was opening. Not from inside but outside, gazing from the meadow while riding a house. Just like that Dorji can feel **a power welled up from within**, as usual. Then guided that power below the navel, the center of Dowl's body or just below the cockpit.

Rudra's Psychonics engine hum as it was filled with Dorji's SIMA. The roar has a power that surpassed Shakara.

Akari who still maintain her link with the cockpit seat, was struck by powerful pressure. It was originated from Rudra. Akari got to feel true power of an ExA that she does not need the check meter to know that it was on a different dimension than her own.

Yokohama army's decision has been reckless, was what she thought. From Akari's position, it would be better if Yokohama army would obediently withdraw. However, personal interest aside, she felt that Yokohama army should not fight with SOFEA, with Rudra.

In the face of this kind of power, the difference in war potential of one to twenty does not matter. Fighting would only meaninglessly increase the injury. As Akari was having vision about the future where Yokohama army's Dowl was turned into wreckage, a change visited Rudra's outward appearance.

Rudra's special feature was the huge X-shape unit on the back. From right shoulder to left waist and from left shoulder and from left shoulder to right waist, crossed at the middle of the back. A thin crossed box like characteristic armament with slits on the front and back. The place took place at the thigh protector on the outer side of both Rudra's legs.

Is that jet engine? Though Akari. However there is not enough space for fuel. Apart from the cylinder unit on both its shoulder, Shakara also carried small tank on its back. However for Rudra, the characteristic armament was the entire surface on the X-shaped unit, the top and bottom surface of the units on its legs where the opened slits that has space just enough for air to go through was.

Shakara dropped its hips. Akari thought it was preparing to charge. Yet in the next instance, the movement seen through her eyes has been the opposite.

Shakara took a big leap back and landed in the middle of the ocean. Shakara

was a Titanic Dowl that used water as a weapon. As a Dowl Master, Kisaragi Ryoichi would probably wanted to overturn the difference in SIMA power.

However, it was not going well.

Not the strategy that was not going well.

Shakara did not fall into the sea.

You've got to be kidding me...

Akari was watching the scene in closed proximity. It may be through Dowl's camera but it was not different from seeing directly with naked eyes.

She could not believe the reality seen through her eyes.

Right after Shakara leap back, Rudra flew. Accompanying a sharp exhaust sound, Rudra galloped midair.

Reduced their twenty meter distance to a mere zero, it crushingly grabbed Shakara's neck, turned Shakara's axle around and land back at its original place.

Gas flow control... 'Wind Spirit'!

Rudra thrown Shakara at its feet and treaded on Shakara's neck, render it powerless. Seeing the rising cloud of dust, Akari finally understood what happen.

SOFEA's ace and Rudra's Dowl Master, Dorji. His other name was 'Dorji of the storm'. Akari though that name meant 'to mow down enemies like the storm'. However 'storm' was a literally meaning. That covered with slits characteristic armament was as it looks, an equipment to let the air goes through.

Amongst characteristic armaments, gas flow control was not considered a powerful trait. Amongst solid, fluid and gas, gas has the most fluidity out of the three but it falls behind in term of density. So low, it is incomparable. For example, at normal temperature and one atmospheric pressure, one cubic meter of air would weigh around one point two kilogram, where one cubic meter of water would weigh about one ton. In other word, more than eight hundredfold of air. However, if air is compress at nine atmospheric pressure without letting it scatter, it would be able to move at tenfold the speed of water, meaning gas flow control could finally surpass liquid flow control in term of movement energy. Although air could be found anywhere inside the earth atmosphere, in

order to archive plenty attack power like solid flow control, an ability to put a large amount of air under control is require.

On the contrary, one who possess the SIMA to control large amount of air would be able to strengthen gas flow control characteristic armament as much as one desire. Ammunition concern is absolutely unnecessary. Without worrying about fuel, as long as ones can continue to provide SIMA, Dowl's gigantic body would be able to freely fly around. Just like Rudra.

Without using the wind sword creation, Dorji created air cannonball using his unit's propulsive power. When Dowl is on the ground, it normally would not be able to obtain driving force that exceed the friction force between its feet and the ground. Even if skillfully control the center gravity, the movement power that ones can use would not exceed the friction. An inevitable problem from a two legged humanoid structure. There is a way raise mobility by using Vernier thruster, but it is limit by the capacity of fuel tank so it cannot be use more than a short time acceleration.

Freely fly about at high speed. It was beyond Akari imagination that flying would had this much advantage over walking on the ground.

Rudra did nothing special.

It merely quickly approached and dealt a blow from the blind spot.

With just that, it ruled the battlefield.

Rudra probably possessed long range attack ability. It was certain that it could use gas flow control to create a powerful 'Wind shield'. However Rudra, Dorji only used that speed to dodge all the attacked and used Nodachi-like long sword to cut down Yokohama army's Dowl.

The moment Yokohama army squad leader that was riding Tokushaka declared that he had accepted the ceasefire, or declaration of surrender in reality, the battle was over. For some reason, after Rudra confirmed that it has evacuated all of Yokohama army's Dowl Master from the cockpit seat, it walked over to Akari's Talos III.

"This is SOFEA affiliated unit Rudra, Dowl Master Lieutenant Dorji."

“This is Odawara’s defense squad affiliated Talos III, Dowl Master Saotome Akari. No military rank.”

Akari, who never thought she would be directly talked to, even though panicked enough she forgot to breathe somehow return a proper self-introduction.

“Can I go with Miss Akari then? I have a personal favor to ask.”

Dorji did not appear surprised after knowing that Akari is a young lady. It was a time where it was not unusual for girls to take up arms. She does not know any other girl in Honshu beside her self that rides Dowl, but girl Dowl Master was probably not unusual in the world, was how Akari thought.

“Just Akari is fine. If it is anything I can do.”

SOFEA probably has their own interests. However, in this battle, for Akari, Dorji was unmistakably her life savior. She thought she would do anything to answer his personal request. Anything he desires, even if he asks her to submit her body to him for one night, she would not mind. She probably thought that because of her lack of experience.

“Is that so?”

A joyous voice could be heard from the communicator. However, the request following it was as unexpected one.

“Then, Akari. Even just a moment is fine, would you mind raise your Psycronics output?”

“Ha? Ah No, I’ll be happy to.”

What in the world he do with this? Thought Akari. He certainly not wanting to scout her for SOFEA. As she deleted her convenience delusion, Akari pour her SIMA into the Psycronics engine.

“Hm...”

He somehow gave off an air of ‘*So I was wrong*’. Thinking it was too convenient yet still expected it to happen, Akari was disappointed beyond words. However, she quickly change her feeling.

“Is this enough, lieutenant Dorji?”

“Ah, sorry. That’s enough.”

Dorji who answer so, did not move from his position. She though he might still have something else to say, Akari, again, raise her voice.

“Lieutenant Dorji?”

“Akari, this maybe an abrupt question, but...”

“Yes”

“Before I arrived, the one who were in combat with Yokohama army’s Shakara was you, is that correct?”

“No. It was my brother.”

“Your brother?”

His voice as he asked by parroting her words was full of curiosity.

“Yes. My brother used Talos IV to combat with Shakara. Although, due to Psycronics breakdown, he is not fit for combat and was force fully ejected with the cockpit unit”

“I see... Akari, could you introduce your brother to us?”

“I don’t really mind...”

Akari does not understand what Dorji was thinking. However, regarding that proposal, an unidentified anxiety was call forth from Akari’s heart.

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SOFEA’s flying mother ship Grenblu was, including the wingspan, a gigantic size of two hundred meters. As a Dowl carrier, in order for it to be operate in any area around the world it is a tactical necessity for it to be able to vertically takeoff and landing, however that was for emergency use, normally it would use takeoff run. Due to size, there is a lot of places it could not takeoff from. For that reason, all SOFEA’s flying mother ship equipped with flying boat functionality. And right now, that gigantic built was floating in Sagami Bay, facing Odawara.

The large helicopter Rudra suspended from approached the wave rocking

Grenblu. Although called large, it was definitely smaller than a Dowl, however it was built with Dowl air transportation in mind so it has plenty lift force. Rudra has an ability to perform solo flight from the ground, by far the only unit known capable of doing it. However, for the convenience of his company, he obediently hanging down from the air transport helicopter.

The one who came to greeted Dorji who got down from Rudra lying down in the hangar storage was,

“Thank you for today, lieutenant.”

Rea Pudi, who just got down from the transport helicopter, one step ahead of him.

“Yeah. Good work to you too, Rea.”

Too the one hundred and eighty centimeters Dorji, Rea was not even one hundred and fifty centimeters tall. As for their age, Dorji was twenty eight and Rea was fifteen years old. So to Dorji, Rea was more of a daughter than a sister.

“The wind seems pretty strong, did the helicopter shake a lot?”

“Thank you for your consideration, lieutenant. But I’m, no, petty officer is alright, sir.”

“Is that so? That’s admirable, Rea.”

It could not be help that their interaction was getting sweeter and sweeter. Regardless of how Rea, who was being treated as a child, feels. (Furthermore, even if ones said that this is like ‘having a daughter’, Dorji himself has no experience in marriage.)

Walking side by side, they headed to the bridge. They would have to report this to the captain anyway, but the one who could not bear it and ask first was Dorji.

“Rea, what do you think of him?”

“About Saotome Aoi-san? I can feel that he is an un-awaken but strong ExA. He’s probably fairly high level as well.”

ExA or Extra Ability was those who has their SIMA index more than one hundred. SIMA strength is generally express from one to one hundred. To become a Dowl Master, one must have more than fifty SIMA index. However

they have found a rare individual who possessed more than one hundred SIMA index.

‘Sima’ who has less than one hundred SIMA index (Those who have more than fifty SIMA index were called ‘Sima’) (TL:note they just wrote the word SIMA in katakana for ‘Sima’ so...) would not be able to influence reality with their image (Image materialize) without the help of Psycronics engine. However, those who has more than one hundred SIMA index could materialize their image without the help of Psycronics engine.

Those who were classically called ‘Psychic’ were called ExA in this era, their power were called Extra ability and is commonly classify as SIMA.

“But I, no, Petty officer do not have any examiner qualification, he would not be validly scout based on petty officer opinion alone.”

Now that is has been actualized, SIMA index could be measure by measuring instrument that incorporates Psycronics technology. However, they need to rely on the power of those who has strong ESP to determine the SIMA of an un-awaken.

“I know that from the beginning so don’t beat yourself over it. If we know that he is definitely an ExA then it would not be a fool’s errand when we call an examiner, right? That in itself has enough meaning.”

I guess we’ll call over that Curtis guy. Dorji muttered to himself while by his side, Rea Pudi was make a very happy expression from being praised.

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“I’m coming in, Aoi.”

“Ah, Nee-san.”

Saying she would be coming in when she was already inside, Akari entered her brother’s room.

“Wow, it’s so dark in here you could only think about depressed things.”

“Well, we have to save the energy after all.”

Odawara Auton was in possession of a terrestrial heat power plant. (To accurate, they were given permission by the Solar System Development Organization as a reward for maintaining the plant) They were people other than Polis who could supply plenty electricity. Even so, in order to maintain the city all citizen were imprinted with to be consciously economical about energy.

Aoi was not doing anything wrong.

“What are you talking about?”

If only this were nighttime.

Akari who was standing at the window, opened the inner part of the double-glazed window and raise the insulate curtain. The dazzling morning sun shone into the room.

“It’s already morning.”

To her brother who is painfully squint his eyes, Akari sigh to cover her astonish expression.

“You don’t even notice that you’ve pull an all-nighter, did you have a lot to think about?”

Without relaxing her astonish expression, Akari asked with worried voice.

What happened yesterday was still fresh in both their mind. Their fight with Yokohama army was a day before yesterday. Yesterday two guest visited the two whose zeal has yet to burn out. One of the other party introduce himself as **the** Dorji, which has made the sibling very excited and panic, while the other tall women, Mayuri Curtis inform them so,

‘Aoi-kun, you are a potential ExA.’

“... I’ll go with them.”

Aoi who hesitated over his sister question, give his decisive answer as if to shake of his hesitation.

“Huh.”

Once again, Akari sigh. But the emotion in it was not astonishment but a resignation.

Seeing the disappointing expression on his sister, Aoi hurriedly continue.

“I don’t really believe that I am an ExA...But if I enlist, the Alliance would extend the right to use the terrestrial power plant from five to thirty years. On the contrary, if I decline...”

“They would not do anything if Yokohama attack again, huh.”

The sister muttered as it was someone else business, while the brother nodded.

“I can’t pretend like I don’t know this. I am a member of this town, too.”

The same time as his sentence ended, there was a brisk sound.

Akari poke her brother’s forehead and leave her finger pressed out, pinning him with an objecting look.

“Don’t say those cheeky lines. You can’t even sleep in a separate futon not long ago.”

“That was a LONG time ago, alright!”

Trembling with his reddened face, Aoi turned his back to Akari while still sitting in his chair.

Akari covered that back.

“Nee-san?!”

Aoi yelled with a voice one hundred and eighty degrees different from before. Aoi has a lot of reasons for him being panicked and shaking, one of them was because his sister’s ample breast was pressed against his back, and Aoi was not used to this kind of thing.

Not noticing her that her brother was trembling, she would not care even if he were to notice, Akari whispered into Aoi’s ear while holding him.

“You are very wrong if you think you would become a sacrifice for this city. You don’t have to become a sacrifice just because you are an ExA. You don’t have to think about it like that. Obligation... I won’t say you have none to the city, but I have already done plenty for your share. If it has become painful to live here, we could always immigrate to another city. I’m not boasting, but I think I’ll be in

great demand where ever I go.”

As his sister bragged while strengthen the arm that hugged him, Aoi bitterly laughed.

“No, that is some splendid boasting right there. Also, I could not let you be the only one who bear the burden.”

“That is called being cheeky.”

She answer her brother with an irritated tone as she separated herself from his back.

Normally, Aoi would hold his tongue against his sister’s menacing look. However, the situation this time was a bit different.

“That’s not it, I’m not going with them unwillingly. All I have been doing so far was depended on you, Nee-san.”

Akari was his only blood relative for as long as he could remember. Both of them has been raise together with other orphan since they were very young. They heard from the elderly lady that looked after them that their parents died ‘for this city’ while fighting with some deserted troops of some Polis. They do not remember the town’s name. Their parent was probably Dowl Master who protected a small Auton in Hokuriku (region west of Tokyo). They immediately abandon that town. No, abandoned by that town. It was the same whichever it was. The town has lost the means to raise them, they left the town that could not provide the energy needed for their citizen’s everyday life. Without understanding anything, the two of them wandered to the next town. These thing repeated annually for them.

The changed in their livelihood happened when Aoi was eleven and Akari was twelve. That time, both of them were living in Otsu Auton. The war between that Otsu Auton and Kyoto Polis suddenly broke out. They later said that the issue was the right to use water from Biwa Lake. It was this war that Akari sortied in a Dowl and crushed Kyoto Polis’s ace and brought about her spectacular victory.

From that point on, Akari has made her name as a ‘remarkably skilled girl-Dowl Master’ in Honshu region and was favorably passed around as a mercenary from Auton to Auton. With his sister’s military talent, Aoi able to obtain an average

livelihood.

“Unlike you, I do not have any power. However, if I possessed extra ability and able to use them...”

I will be the one who protect you this time. A though he did not put into words was clearly transmitted to Akari.

As her brother hanged his head and continue his monologue, Akari did not object. No, she could not object. ExA. It is said that there is one in fifty million chances you could find them, an owner of more than one hundred SIMA index.

The reason why those who has more than one hundred SIMA index is specially called ExA was because when SIMA index crossed the one hundred line, the meaning of SIMA will drastically change.

People who has less than one hundred SIMA index would not be able to use the power of their mind to altered physical phenomenon without the help Psycronics engine. They could not alter phenomenon with their image.

However, ExA could alter physical phenomenon with their thought alone. No matter how trivial, ExA could repaint the world with their thought.

And when those ExA get on the optimal solution for Psycronics weapon that is Dowl, they would display fighting strength that is completely different from Dowl Master who have less than one hundred SIMA index.

Akari wondered. Why she did not possess such ability. If she had those ability, she could protect Aoi better than before. She hide those thought in her heart then lean her ear to her brother's word.

“ExA is a member of SOFEA. That is just an official statement, everyone know that they force people to join them. On the contrary, it also means that the only people who know how to develop a potential ExA like me is only SOFEA.”

Aoi continue to speak each and every word, as if to persuade himself.

“I don't believe in any of the Alliance's ideals. I do think that there is no righteousness the Alliance.”

Aoi suddenly and tightly grasp his hand. Akari understand those feeling all too well. It was because Akari and Aoi were one of the children rejected by Polis, by

the world that has the alliance at its summit.

“I’m not doing this for righteousness or ideals, I’m doing in order to gain the power that would prevent me from being crush by someone else’s righteousness or someone else’s ideals. For that reason, I must go with SOFEA.”

“Aoi...”

Akari put both her hands on Aoi shoulder, his body shiver with a start.

Akari once again lean her body onto Aoi’s back, with her hand circling around her brother’s neck.

“Ue! My neck! Nee-san, that’s my neck!”

To her brother protested, Akari did not lend her ear.

“I said enough with those cheeky lines. You aren’t thinking about being the one to protect me, are you? Because that is a hundred years too quick.”

“It’s painful, my neck, I can’t breathe, your chest is touching me...”

Aoi keep tapping at his sister’s arm that was doing the sleeper hold on his neck as he deliriously blurted out his incomplete sentence.

Probably satisfied with his sorry stated (the thing she was actually satisfied with was a mystery), Akari released Aoi and intentionally let out a huge sigh.

“I guess that’s inevitable. If you’re also decided on that I guess we should start preparing, then.”

Also decided on that?

Unable to ignore the out of place feeling he felt to his sister’s word, Aoi frighteningly asked.

“...preparing for what?”

“Preparing to go to Iwato Island, of cause. I’ll be the first time were in space. They said they’ll prepare all the necessity, but you should pack your own underwear.”

“Um...I think I could do that on my own.”

“Well, I guess you would have your hands full with just preparing for yourself.”

His out of place feeling turned to conviction.

Not wanting to believe that, Aoi begin his useless resistance by retorting.

“I think it would be fine just packing only my stuff.”

“You want me to go to a boarding school with just what I’m wearing? If we don’t go along with the departing procedure for this house, there won’t be any loan house left for us when we came back, you know?”

“Nee-san, don’t tell me you are going to tag along with me, aren’t you?”

“Of course not, I’m enrolling to.”

“...Enrolling where?”

“Are you stupid? It’s the Iwato training school, of course. They didn’t come for just you. Well, it was unexpected that they would scouted me, who is not even an ExA though.”

His conviction has become real, Aoi hurriedly stand up.

“Wait! Aren’t you Odawara Auton’s ace?!”

Approached with the loud noise, Akari grimaced and covered her ears but her expression did not change more than that.

“I don’t think there is anyone in the Honshu eastern part that is stupid enough to attack a city who has sent their military officer to alliance’s high class training school.”

What she said was quite right. Aoi lost all his word of objection and persuasion.

“Also, if I left you alone, you probably go off and make a blunder somewhere, the thought of that brought me nothing but uneasiness. I don’t really like becoming alliance’s pet dog, but as a sister, I guess I’ll have to go and supervise you.”

With her abusive speech, Akari left her brother’s room.

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The sound of someone violently hitting the sandbag continue without pause.

“Hey, Kisaragi...you are going overboard with that. You’re going to destroy your body from over working.”

“It’s not funny if you’re injured from training on your day off, you know?”

The greeting was from his military co-workers. They were correct, Ryoichi was feeling irritated or possibly self-abandonment and he was self-aware of it. But he did not stop hitting the sand bag. His body would not stop.

After they returned to Yokohama, Ryoichi immediately took his day off. It was because Shakara was being repair after it got done in by Rudra, there was really nothing he could do in the base. He was just laying around in his lodging in the first day, but with the scene of him being easily defeated by Rudra was floating at the back of his mind, his arms and legs became violent on its own. He was ‘stamping at one’s feet in frustration’. His lodging was a single room so no else could see him. But Ryoichi though acting like a child was too shameful, he elected to torment his body to divert himself from that frustration. With that thought in mind, he started to frequent the gym from the second day of his day off.

He is currently living alone but both his parents is still in good health and his brother and sister is living in Yokohama.

As it was established as a sister city to Tokyo Polis, Yokohama Polis depended on Tokyo for energy supply. In other word, the energy plant inside the city could not satisfy its citizen’s demand for energy.

Yokohama was not the only polis like this. And the city that could not produce enough energy such as Yokohama has a citizen replacement system. Family that is of small contribution to the city would be replace with others that desire to be a citizen.

It is because Ryoichi is a Dowl Master and in service to Yokohama army that his family got their right of residence preferentially renewed. He probably wouldn’t be accuse for their defeated this time. The high official in the military government was also saying that [his opponent was too bad] as if to consul him.

But it is true that there is no more chances. Or at least that is how Ryoichi felt.

This is the last of his day off. When morning comes, the days where he would be training and coast patrolling without having time to breathe will return. The Shakara he piloted, which was unusual even in a global scale for being able to operate on both land and sea, was given sea-patrolling duty.

The fact that Yokohama suffered heavy damage at the hand of SOFEA was probably known to at least all the political powers in East Asia region. The party that wants to invade in order to steal their reserved resources and food has, without doubt, increased.

And if we turn blind eyes to them...

Ryoichi stop hitting the sandbag and sigh heavily. No matter how violent he move his body, he could not empty his mind. The minus though just come up one after another.

It would seem that he was being pulled back by the defeated a lot more than he thought. Judging that he needed a mood changer Ryoichi stopped his training and go out to the city.

Polis may be a self-sufficient fortified city, but that does not mean it has not trade with the outside. Things that are cheaper to buy than recycle would be import and surplus product that some Polis could produce at a lower cost than other Polis would be often be export. The basis of Polis's economic activity was not always import and export but in order to stabilize its national situation, Polis would also trade with production area that is not Polis.

Outside of Yokohama Polis there is Yokohama port and a port town. Originally, the reason Tokyo Polis established Yokohama as a sister city was because they were aiming to expand their foreign trade by utilizing it as a maritime position. The means of transportation midair has been monopolized by the Alliance. So the current means of trade in the twenty fifth century were maritime trading, and the ticket window being harbor.

Ryoichi walked until he is next to the harbor. One must be strictly checked to go through the city gate but the ID card distributed to the army's Dowl Master has a lot of preferential code embedded in it. All you need to do is put them through the scanner and no question would be asked. The status of those who

affiliated with Yokohama army would not be revealed. In order to prevent the Dowl Master from being kidnap or assassinate, their identity were designated as military secret. Using his card, Ryoichi pass through the gate.

The port town of outside of the Polis but its citizen has a bright and carefree expression. For alliance's basis this town would be classify as an Auton. However, the feeling that citizens were concealing themselves or being at their wits end like in Odawara is nowhere to be seen here. It is clearly inconvenience comparing to the inside of the rampart, but it looks plenty easygoing.

From the start, Odawara and this town called 'Yokohama Sea Side' could not be treated equally. The definition of Auton is 'a land with self-government community unregistered as a Polis', unrelated to the population, social status or economic power. No matter how rich or how poor, if it is not a Polis then it is an Auton.

However, Naturalist's community does not count as an Auton. Because the Alliance does not recognize that as a self-governing body. Polis were **registered** by the Alliance, the have right to vote over things such as alliance's policies or human resources (however, there is a lot of the Alliance's activity that the Polis have not right to vote over). The self-govern community that the Alliance recognize were **recorded** as Auton and would be protected from any dispute. In the end, Auton came under Alliance control via police power. Is just that Auton's citizen does not know that they are under the protection.

The name Auton came from the English word 'Autonomy', but the citizen of Polis likes to insultingly call them 'Outer'. Not every city outside of the Polis were Auton, and at the same time, Auton was not a simple and general concept.

Originally, Outer referred to a place adjacent to Polis's rampart, like this Yokohama Sea Side, entirely depend on Polis's economic activity, or could be badly express as a Parasitism on Polis citizen. In fact, Outer is a host of Polis citizen who has lost their qualification, so you could say the disdain was a flip side of their anxiety of not knowing when they would be branded as an unqualified citizen, a Sloan, and degraded to Outer.

The citizen of Polis were all unconsciously avert their gaze from this anxiety. And not being conscious of the reason why, they continued to scorn Auton as

outer. Forgetting why they insult them, but still amassing their discriminating consciousness.

Still feeling meaninglessly discomfort and unconscious of the different between Auton and Outer, Ryoichi gaze at the town scenery through his insulting filter. He became irritated at Yokohama Sea Side comfortable livelihood when comparing it to the severe livelihood of Odawara citizen. At this moment Ryoichi has not notice that what Yokohama government wanted was to increase the severity of Odawara livelihood. It was unconscious therefor, it does not seem like he would notice it.

To have his early breakfast, he got in one of the restaurant. Next to his seat the couple around the same age as him were talking about trifle things.

Once again, Ryoichi became irritated.

The dismantling of states became definitive a bit more than half century after the 'Reaction War'. The disorder after the war still left its mark on the world. Even now, the Japanese main land has yet to clear away all of them. If putting Ryoichi feeling in to word, it would be *"how could they still act like that!"*

He may not be have been self-aware of it, but he was eighty percent correct.

The standard education of Polis started by teaching about modern civilization and general knowledge for society at the age of five to fifteen, at the age of sixteen to twenty, they are taught special knowledge about business. The time would be shorter for those with excellent ability and those who could not keep up with the study would not be given Polis citizenship. This was also about the same for other region.

However, those who in military service were an exception. For example, the general rule for alliance direct controlled army is that you have to be at least eighteen years old, but if you are an ExA (people with more than one hundred SIMA index) or and ESPer(people who passed ESP test) could be assign to real combat squad even if they are under eighteen years old. For Polis that lacks excellent pilot, they would sometime put people with aptitude for piloting in a real combat squad regardless to their age.

Ryouichi started boarding Dowl at the age of sixteen. Presently, he is nineteen years old. If he had not have the aptitude for a Dowl Master, he would have

taken the professional education course and living a carefree life like the couple next to him. Polis's professional education course is a fear of falling, fear of being brand as a Sloan, the student outside of the Polis were scared of this unstable livelihood, but the grass is always greener from the other side.

Luckily, when Ryoichi silently finished his breakfast, the couple next to him was already gone. The new people who were guided to the table next to him were two young women. Both of them were quite a high level beauty. Ryoichi who felt like it would be regrettable if he left his seat, completely opposite from before, slowly savoring his after meal coffee while secretly looking the table next to him.

The people sitting at the next table was a darkish skin beauty with black hair. She probably has thick South East Asian blood in her. She sometimes tidy her hair up, making an alluring gesture. She herself probably understood her own sex appeal since her cloths were the sexy type with a lot of exposure. But the girl who highlight their own sex appeal was not his type, so it was not like he could not avert his eyes from them.

Sitting diagonally opposite from him and gazing at the menu was a girl with sauvage (TL notes: French for hair with curved tip) blond hair and ivory white skin. She was probably around the same age as Ryoichi. She has a bigger bust size than the black hair girl. Ryoichi was not 'woman's breast should be big' type, but the European beautiful girl's refine feature, the traditional cloth and other parts were perfectly to his liking.

To be clear, in military life, it is hard to meet and develop a relationship is meagre. The back ground of the other party was yet unknown, but it was improper to not call out to them. It is ok to leave if they were shady person. He was not a man who would let this chance go because he was wary of something that may have been useless.

If they ordered food then the after meal, if they were just having a drink then he would call out to them when the drink was about to arrive. Having decided that, Ryoichi focus on his sense of hearing. In short, eves dropping. Luckily, this store use an old fashion way of informing the employee what your order. The black hair woman called in a waitress, foot step approached. The order was two black tea. Ryoichi opened his half-closed eyelids, pretending to look over to the waitress and met eyes with the woman sitting diagonally opposite from him.

As for why there their eyes met.

It was because that beauty was looking at Ryoichi before he even turned to her.

“Um. Excuse me, but can I talk to you for a bit?”

The beautiful woman asked with a charming smile as she stood up.

“Is it ok if I go there?”

“Yes, by all means.”

To the beautiful woman who put her hand on the seat next to him, Ryoichi answer while frantically restrain his exited voice.

“I’m Felicia Lin. Please call me Cia.”

“Rose Cruse. Call me Rose” (TL notes: Ro-se, not Rose.)

After called a clerk to join the table, the two woman sitting side by side across from Ryoichi introduced themselves. The blond hair sitting directly in front of him were Felicia and the black hair sitting on a chair diagonally opposite from him is Rose.

“I am-”

“You are Ryoichi-san, right?”

Ryoichi who was about to introduce himself were interrupted but Felicia.

“Dowl Master of the Shakara, the personal unit of Yokohama-polis.”

Following by Rose.

“Why do you know about me!? The identity of Dowl Master is a military secret. Civilian could not have known them!”

Ryoichi unconsciously stood up. His horny though complete vanish in a second. He still have the will to restrain his voice, but that was it. The look and voice he direct and both Felicia and Rose was very stern.

“We will answer all your question, so could you please listen to what we have to say?”

Felicia did not lose the smile on her face, even when face with a dangerous

tone of voice or looks. One would question that her smile was not of the one with calm and gentle atmosphere, but that of ones who were used to the scene of carnage. If Ryoichi reported in, both of them would have been restrain. The shop may be outside of the rampart, but there is no room for any doubt that this seaside town is under Yokohama-polis influence, in other words, control. They won't be treated roughly if they don't resist, but the interrogation is inescapable.

However, Ryoichi did not do so.

"Who are you people?"

Instead he sat down as if nothing happened, then asked.

"The other day was a disaster, isn't it?"

Yet the answer coming from Felicia's charming red lips was words with unclear meaning.

"The other day?"

Even though he thought that he was being led around, he asked back as requested.

"The Sagami costal bay incident. That was an utter defeated, right?"

Ryoichi grimace at how Rose does not mince matters. He could not make any excuse as it was a one sided defeated, but he could not be happy having that point out by a total stranger. Even if the other party was a beautiful woman.

"It can't be help. After all, Rudra was a master piece unit that has all the technology of SOFEA's genius engineer, **that** Saraswati Patel implant into it. More than that, because of their frequent battle, SOFEA engineering staff still continue to upgrade it, making it a substantial state-of-the-art unit. Shakara was a good unit considering it was put together buy one Polis, but it still have no edge over the opponent that is Rudra. There is no chance Ryoichi-san would win, no matter how good you are."

Felicia consolation was, to Ryoichi, a reasonable and comfortable excuse. However, he noticed that there is some contents in her words that he could not ignored.

“Wait... How did you know that much?”

“What do you mean by *‘that much’*?”

The expression of Felicia who was smiling while tilting her head has a virtue of a nun and as innocent as an infant. However, Ryoichi was tainted by the era enough to not be deceived by it.

“Rudra’s name should be easily known even to the people that is not a Polis citizen. However, how could a civilian know the name of Rudra’s developer? The background of Rudra’s developer maybe not be a highest of military secret, but it definitely on a higher level than the identity of Dowl Master.”

At the time, the name of ‘Saraswati Patel’ was yet unknown to Ryoichi.

“To have known the secret unknown even to a Polis soldier, what are you people?”

A repeated question. Sitting beside the unchanging smile Felicia, Rose finally started smiling. The phrase ‘Poison flower’ floated in the back of Ryoichi’s mind. In contrast to Felicia’s smile, it was a smile filled with sinful fragrance, it suited Rose very much.

“Kisaragi Ryoichi, Do you want to beat Rudra?”

“What?”

A commotion was caused in side Ryoichi’s heart. The reason he only gave a short single word was because if he had said any more than this, he would not be able to hide the fact that they have guessed his true feelings.

“Recently, at every battle field, there are nothing but fools who would lose their fighting spirit when they saw Rudra’s body. It has been a year since I have seen anyone who have enough backbone to challenge that unit. If it was you...”

Rose stared at Ryoichi with a manner as if she could see through his beating heart.

“If the unit’s ability is of the same level, you wouldn’t lose to even an ExA. Isn’t that what you think?”

“If it was us, we could provide you with a unit that is able to stand up to Rudra.”

To Rose roundabout announcement, Felicia follow up with a clear definite.

“A unit that could stand up to Rudra... is that still a Dowl?”

“Of course.”

“An organization that could product Dowl to match SOFEA... Don’t tell me you guys are,”\

“Could you at least keep your voice down?”

As Ryoichi was about to give his decisive word, Rose sharply intervene. Her action has the same meaning as affirming Ryoichi words.

“I am Genomus’s intelligent agent.”

Lowering the volume of her voice, Rose reveal her back ground.

“And I am Genomus’s Flying mother ship operator.”

Felicia continued with the same small voice.

Genomus. An anti-solar system alliance secret society. According to the slogan, it was to abolish the Alliance dictatorship. Ryoichi heard that their main objective was to return the resource management right back to the government of those resource territory.

Turning this world that is now rule by the Alliance back to the world where people would rule their own respective lands. An independence world where states sovereignty is restored. Although bearing the reoccurring risk of the Great War that change the former world into a wasteland, a free and energetic society, like that of the pre-war period. Genomus declared that they would restore it.

A world that was not shut off behind walls. Ryoichi sees that as a charming thing.

“Ryoichi-san. We value you highly as a Dowl Master.”

“So you are scouting me? I’m not an ExA like Dorji, you know?”

Although he decline with his words, Ryoichi has already hugely inclined to the offer.

“The SIMA index was not the absolute factor for moving a Dowl. To me, I think the Ryoichi-san is only one who could manage the ‘Mac Lir’ that doctor has

develop” (TL notes: Mac Lir is a sea deity in Irish mythology)

“Doctor?”

“He is Genomus chief scientist, Doctor John O'brian.”

“Cia?”

Rose raised a surprise sound to Felicia who answered Ryoichi's question. Just as Ryoichi has said, the information about Dowl developer was a serious matter of secrecy.

“Rose, we really need Ryoichi-san. Both Doctor and Captain would understand.”

Having told Rose that, Felicia once again turn her eyes back to Ryoichi.

“Ryoichi-san, could you please become our comrade?”

Originally, Ryoichi is already sympathies with Genomus opinion. And added to that, they said they would provide a unit that could stand up to Rudra. This offer has a sweet effect on Ryoichi's ears.

Ryoichi still saw that defeat in his nightmare, literally, every day. Seeing that scene where he was stricken down to the ground every time he dreamt, the humiliation he felt that time has carve itself deep in his heart.

Now, he was given a chance to vindicate his honor against that Rudra. That in itself was enough to move his heart. However, it would be careless for him to make his decision from just that.

“...Understood. I do have a thought or two about this world being rule by the Alliance. So please make me your comrade.”

“Thank you very much!”

Felicia smile with her entire face with both her eyes glittering. Seeing that the ‘Could you please become our comrade’ was definitely not an act was the last push Ryoichi needed.

However immediately after, Ryoichi's expression became clouded. He suddenly remembered his parents and siblings.

“You don't have to worry about your family.”

Rose cut in as if she could read his thought.

“We will have you become our war potential while you are still in Yokohama army.”

“You want me to become a spy...?”

‘That’s not what you promised.’ Ryoichi reflexively thought. At that moment, his heart was even more confused than being betrayed.

“No. What we ask of your Ryoichi-san, is that you pilot the Mac Lir.”

His confusion grown larger at Felicia’s words. He thought it would be impossible for him to be a Yokohama’s Dowl squad but instead pilot a Genomus Dowl.

“Ryoichi. We will have you go to Iwato Island.”

“Iwato Island? You want me to go to the space?”

Rose’s proposal should have been the solution to Ryoichi’s concern. However he could not see any relation to it.

“Do you know about Iwato Island?”

“Y, Yeah... It was an orbital satellite, an Island floating at Lagrange point 4 and a place where Alliance’s high class training school was located right?”

Ryoichi nodded, still seeing no connection in what they were talking about.

“That is correct. First, you are to enroll there. Then you are to go missing during the training.”

“The victim of an accident that happens during Alliance’s training would be honorably removed from Polis as killed in action. Your family would not be neglected.”



“After all, the practice that happen at Iwato training school be treat as military service. The Alliance would not stay quiet if the family of the people who engage in their operation and was killed in action got chase out of the Polis.”

After Rose and Felicia mutual explanation, Ryoichi finally understood what they were trying to say. He thought that it was an effective way. However he did not think that Alliance’s high class training school is some place that could be easily slip in.

“But...how?”

“Leave that to us.”

“It would be fine if it was Ryoichi-san.”

“...What would be fine?”

“Ryoichi-san is way more famous than you yourself though.”

“We meant that the Alliance that is in demand for excellence pilot would agree.”

It seems that the both of them have something in mind. Because Ryoichi does not have any better method, he have no choice but to rely on the two about his family. He has already though about him joining Genomus as a done deal.

“But...you would be unable to meet your family.”

However, Felicia hesitant word was, as if to emphasize, added to the matter. It was probably an enquiry for Ryoichi’s last alternative.

To retraces one’s step, this is the last chance.

“I was already prepared for that from the beginning.”

There was no hesitation in Ryoichi’s answer. Not being able to meet his family did not shake his heart in the slightest.

He had wanted the opportunity. To test how far his power could take him.

A desire Polis army could not granted.

The non-ExA Dowl master could not archive victory over the Dowl piloted by ExA.

To destroy that commonsense.

To make the impossible possible.

To defeat ExA with his non-ExA self.

The enemy Ryoichi gazing at was Dorji’s Rudra, the SOFEA behind his back and the Solar System Alliance itself.